

INTO ANOTHER INTENSITY

Jatindra Mohan Mohanty

POST-GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UTKAL UNIVERSITY

INTO ANOTHER INTENSITY

ESSAYS ON ORIYA LITERATURE

JATINDRA MOHAN MOHANTY

POST-GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UTKAL UNIVERSITY

. BHUBANESWAR

Into Another Intensity : Essays on Oriya Literature, by
Jatindra Mohan Mohanty, Professor and Head, Department
of English, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar.

Published by :

The Post-Graduate Department of English
Utkal University, Bhubaneswar-751 004

1989

Printed at :

SHOVAN
106, Acharya Vihar, Bhubaneswar-751 013

Price Rs. 40/-

.

A NOTE

Though the beginnings of Oriya literature are traced to a time before Sarala Das, the great 15th century epic-poet, to such semi-religious tracts as *Amarakosa* and *Sisu Veda* yet its modern period, as is generally understood, began sometime in the later half of the 19th century, under the impact of Western education and British administration, when new ways of understanding and attitude developed at par with the changing times. Another such watershed is Independence. The post-Independence literature, not only in Oriya, but in all Indian languages, is not only vaster and larger in comparison to what was produced earlier, but far more comprehensive and complicated. The times have not only radically changed, but also the attitude and understanding, and a true assessment of the multiple dimensions of the post-Independence literature is a serious and complicated job. Hence the present essays, as related to Oriya literature, have their relevance and need. It may also be pointed out that such essays, apart from the fresh evaluation they tend to bear upon Oriya literature, particularly modern Oriya literature, have their special utility for interested readers outside the Oriya language area. They not only evaluate and assess, but also project the creative spirit of a major language of India spoken by above 25 million people. It would be a pleasure if these essays succeed in their twin objectives—to shed new lights on accepted areas, and to foster a link between the writers and the readers many of whom may be knowing the former for the first time. Of special interest to the readers may be the last two essays, on Sri Gopinath Mohanty and Sri Sachi Routray respectively. Sri Mohanty and Sri Routray received Jnanpith Award, the highest literary award in India.

J. M. Mohanty

CONTENTS

Post-Independence Oriya Literary Scene : An overview	1
✓ Modern Oriya Drama	22
Modern Oriya Poetry	30
✓ Nationalism and Poetry : Oriya Scene	92
Ramayana Tradition in Oriya : A Study	106
The Mahabharat and the Modern Oriya Writers : A Study of Attitude	116
Worship of Mother Goddess— Sarala and Radhanath : A Comparative Reference	131
✗ Gopinath Mohanty Novelist	138
✓ Sachi Routray : His Life and Work	149
Index	157

POST-INDEPENDENCE ORIYA LITERARY SCENE : AN OVERVIEW

Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* was published in 1945 and Ramakanta Rath's *Sri Radha* in 1985. The former was a novel and the latter a book of poetry. The two publications spanned a period of 40 years and during this period, generally the post-Independence period, Oriya literature which had begun from about 15th century, has almost gone through a sea-change. It is not quantity alone which counts, though that is one of the considerations. In fact by a rough estimate one can say that during the above 40 years not less than 20000 books must have been published which is a much higher figure in comparison to the number of books written and published relating to the preceeding 500 years. No doubt it was due to the Independence and the energies and opportunities it generated. Thus whereas ancient literature was either rearrangement of epics and epical sequences or restructuring of Vaishnavite themes or expression of limited devotional emotions, modern Oriya literature as a whole, beginning from later 19th century, and particularly post-Independence literature, exhibits wide varieties of emotions, sensibilities, attitudes and approaches as well as multifaceted themes related to social, political, cultural atmosphere on the one hand, and psychological problems of sentience and existence on the other. Besides, whatever is local or national has now merged into whatever else is international or cosmopolitan and the modern writers and writings have become the local manifestations of world-soul and cosmopolitan attitudes. Then there is the greater confidence, involvement, shaping of the creative spirit to respond to the challenges of the time, and a greater awareness of changes, and a resilience to adopt to these. And finally there is a deeper understanding

and perception as well as a profounder vision that transcends local considerations to meditate upon the man's predicament in a world that has changed from industry to technology and finally to nuclear holocaust. Thus the changes have been both in numerical terms as well as in terms of the mind and attitudes, and all these, as reflected in post-Independence Oriya literature, have given it a remarkable substantiality not found earlier.

Gopinath Mohanty (born 1914) has been of course, the greatest writer of this period, and one of the greatest of the last 120 years, the full span of modern Oriya literature. His first novel *Managahirar Chasa* (Tilling the Mind's Depth) was published in 1940.

But his first great novel *Paraja*, about the tribal class, as is pointed out already, was published in 1945. It was quickly followed by an equally significant work and in some respects a superior one, entitled *Amrutar Santan* (Immortal Sons), two years later, in 1947. The two books dealt with the tribals of southern Orissa, the former with the Parajas and the latter with the Kondhs. Both the tribes belonged to one ethnic group, though between them the Kondhs claimed a much older ancestry and were numerically much larger. They both stayed away from the educated, more affluent and civilized people of the coastal areas, in the midst of remote mountains and jungles, though the long hand of civilization did reach them and did unsettle their long settled habits in more than one ways. Gopinath's strength lay in his intimate knowledge of their life-conditions and life-styles which he had acquired through his long stay among them during his service-career. Thus a very important aspect of the novels lies in the knowledge they communicate about the tribes, not in the objective, mechanical way, but through the golden touch of creative imagination, and hence to that extent the effects becoming more cumulative and lasting. Secondly, the universals have been seen through particular families

and characters, and their activities have been assessed not only with relation to each other but also at the same time in the vast backdrop of nature of mountains and forests which themselves appear to be as sentient and organic through their complicated relationship with human beings. Thirdly, that which is most important, is the realization of change in civilization and the related changes in attitudes and values, as well as in living conditions. That is, that which has been rooted so long, apparently so solidly, is now being uprooted and the new civilization of the plains is cutting, like knife through butter, through the so called unitary compactness of tribal life. Thus in *Paraja*, the protagonist Sukrujani's family breaks into pieces and his and his sons' attempts to restore its life-force ends in futility. Similarly in *Amrutar Santan* Sarabu Saonta, the symbol of substantial life, dies in the beginning and what follows is an account of steady disintegration of habits, values and attitudes. Of course, as the two novels, in about 1500 pages, portray the innumerable complications of the tribes through their day to day struggles, the focus is strongly on their joys, happiness and hopes. But evil, or at least an awareness of evil's operation, is a substantial part of the novels' structure and the hopeful buoyancy of perception is counter-balanced by the dark shadows of futility and loss of hope.

The understanding which is initiated and established in the two tribal novels, also continues in Gopinath's third major novel, *Matimatala* (1964). The novel, which runs for about a thousand pages, is a massive work on rural life in the coastal villages of Orissa shortly after Independence. There are innumerable details, as well as situations and characters, in the novel, and never before such a comprehensive account of village-life was produced in Oriya literature. The novel's structural patterns are also complicated and they operate at a number of levels, beginning from physical locations, to ideas and dreams on the one hand, and from rituals, superstitions, fairs, festivals

to enlightenment, changes, and rural developments on the other. Strangely for such a massive novel the link of a story is minimum, and the main characters have not only been hazily drawn, their actions have also been almost unidentifiable. In fact what dominates the novel is an idea or better, the dreams of a young man who wants to organize the forces against disintegration. In the process, and on the face of severely corroding elements, what emerges is a unique, compact livingness of Oriya village-life which on the one hand provides immense strength and satisfaction that such a thing is still there, and on the other an immense sadness that it is visibly breaking up and disintegrating and that as such it cannot stay much longer. Both the tribal novels of Gopinath as well as *Matimatala* have been conceived and executed in epic scales and they together give the most comprehensive picture of Oriya life both in the plains as well as in the hills, and both in local details as well as in essentials at the time of Independence and immediately after it. Allied to these approaches and attitudes all the three novels were written in a language which was not only rooted to the soil and intimately colloquial as related to respective locations and communities, but at the same time structurally, it had a strong flavour of poetry, and highly imagistic. Never before, since the time of Phakir Mohan Senapati, the great Oriya novelist at the turn of the century, such books with such competence and command over language, have been written in Oriya. These, along with Gopinath's other novels (numbering about 22) and stories (numbering about 200), and dealing differently with rural, urban and tribal lives, have on the one hand continued the most significant colloquial tradition in Oriya literature, which beginning with Sarala Das (15th century) has continued through such major figures like Balaram Das (15th/16th), Jagannath Das (15th/16th), Bhaktacharan (18th), Dinakrushna (18th), Abhimanyu (18th), Kabisurya (18th/19th), Gopal Krushna (18th/19th),

Bhima Bhoi (19th), and Phakir Mohan (19th/20th) etc. and on the other, have given a new adult maturity to post-Independence Oriya literature and provided a rich sustenance to new Oriya writers to grow and develop.

II

Though Gopinath remains as the most important writer in the post-Independence literary scene in Oriya, interestingly it is not novel as a genre but other genres such as poetry, short story and to some extent drama, which have had the richest growth during this period. First of all, they broke with the past, that is, they come to be different from the type of poetry, short story and drama which were in vogue and popular before Independence or even at the time of Independence. But secondly and more importantly, it was in the quality of adult reaction to the problems of contemporary life, and particularly in a ready responsiveness to the changes in taste and sensibility that their significance lay. Talking of individuals, major writers in these genres are, Sachidananda Routray (born 1918), Guruprasad Mohanty (born 1924), Ramakanta Rath (born 1934) and Sitakanta Mahapatra (born 1937) in poetry, Surendra Mohanty (born 1922), Kishori Charan Das (born 1924), Mahapatra Nilamoni Sahoo (born 1926) and Manoj Das (born 1934) in short story, and Manoranjan Das (born 1921) in drama.

Sachidananda Routray, the eldest of the group, could be taken as a 'link-writer', because though the symptoms of change were first seen in his poetry, in a sense a part of his poetry belonged to the pre-Independence days and conformed to the type of 'romantic' and 'progressive' poetry written at that time. Yet his early poetry showed a careful concern for form which by itself was an indication of a new awareness. Thus his *Pallisree* group of poems dealing with rural-life are at one level romantic, mellifluous sketches, but at another level careful, precise accounts

having an unusual perception and insight. Or differently, his poems of left-commitment, such as *Baji Rout*, apart from their rhetorical tone and meditative-melancholic mood, also show a concern for reality and formal organization. But that part of his poetic talent which became articulate after *Swagat* (Soliloquy) group of poems in the mid-fifties, has shown a serious concern for form and content and has given him the credit of a pioneer poet in the new mode. Routray continued to write in the sixties and seventies and his poems more and more continued to exhibit his capacity to respond to new taste and understanding. His subsequent volumes were *Kabita 1962*, *Kabita 1969*, *Kabita 1971* and *Kabita 1974* etc. At the same time they particularly showed Routray's sensitiveness to a spoken conversational style as also his capacity to use colloquial idioms wherever necessary.

But more than Routray the person who was responsible for formulation and establishment of new taste, attitude and idiom in poetry was Guruprasad Mohanty, who first came to limelight in early fifties and continued to write poems till early sixties when he almost stopped writing. In this he was very ably supported by Ramakanta Rath and Sitakanta Mahapatra. Ramakanta's poetical career began from mid-fifties and Sitakanta's from early sixties. Both continue to be active, continually experimenting on new forms and themes, and in a way dominate the contemporary Oriya poetical scene. All three, that is, Guruprasad, Ramakanta and Sitakanta, have their strength in the intensity of their involvement with the mid and later 20th century's urban and technological civilization, and the patterns of existence this has brought to bear on contemporary living. One innovation which all these three poets did was to introduce long poems, not the narrative or descriptive poems in the manner of earlier pre-Independence Oriya poets, but poems elaborating themes, attitudes, points of view—the model being Eliot's *The Waste Land*. But except

Guruprasad who is probably closest to Eliot in sensibility, the other two have developed independently, though all the three have freely used such devices like wit, irony, paradox and ambiguity etc. in their total poetic exposition. Another similarity which they had, which was also a unique structural device, was their incorporation of ancient myths, particularly as related to Krishna, as a part of their total poetic attitude and motivation. This brought an amount of commonalty and universality in their poetry which was not seen in Oriya poetry before. Thus Guruprasad made references to Uddhab and Akrura, two associates of Sri Krishna, as symbolizing suffering, dedication and hope, and the journey of Akrura from Mathura to Gopa to bring Sri Krishna, as the journey to new life and bliss. Ramakanta took up the relationship between Radha and Krishna, elaborated its innumerable complications and projected it as an intimate symbolic involvement in both the forces of life and death. Sitakanta took a wider range, from the birth of Krishna to his death referred to a number of his associates and followers, and generally presented Krishna's life-pattern as symbolizing resurrection and redemption. Guruprasad had only one independent poetry-collection entitled *Samudrasnan* (Sea-bathing) which contained most of his important poems that numbered about 30, including his longest poem (375 lines) *Kalapurusa* (The Hunter). The book was published in 1970, when Guruprasad had almost ceased writing, and got Sahitya Akademi award in 1973. Though few, Guruprasad's poems shocked and provoked reading public as few poems had done earlier, and *Kalapurusa* particularly, dealing with an alienated vision of life was not only rooted in the post-Independence Oriya urban culture, but also at the same time gave remarkable evidence of the supple powers of Oriya idiomatic language. In contrast Ramakanta has 5 volumes till date. They are *Ketedinara* (Far-off Days), *Anek Kothari* (Many Rooms), *Sandigdha Mrugaya* (The Doubtful Hunt), *Saptama Rutu* (The Seventh

Season), *Sachitra Andhar* (Illustrated Darkness) and *Sri Radha* (Sri Radha) published in the years 1962, 1967, 1971, 1977, 1982 and 1985 respectively, which together include about 240 poems, including two long ones *Baghasikar* (The Tiger Hunt, 289 lines) and *Ananta sayan* (The Eternal Sleep, 191 lines). Similarly Sitakanta has 8 volumes entitled *Dipti O Dwiti* (The Shine and the Glow) *Astapadi* (Eight Steps), *Sabdar Akash* (The Sky of Words) *Samudra* (The Sea), *Chitranadi* (The Pictorial River), *Aara Drusya* (The Other Scene), *Samayar Sesha Nama* (The Last Name of Time) and *Kahaku Puchchiba kuha* (Tell me, whom to Ask) published in 1963, 1967, 1971, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1984 and 1986 respectively containing a number of long poems, particularly in the second volume *Astapadi*. It may be said that Ramakanta provided a deep troubled voice to modern Oriya poetry, troubled because of its intense awareness of futility, which was at the same time contemplative and analytical, and to that extent achieved a remarkable objectivity, more so particularly in his latest volume *Sri Radha*. In Sitakanta's poetry on the other hand, though a similar intense preoccupation with death, agony and futility continue, and in a voice, both contemplative and analytical, yet the poetic-understanding could be seen moving to newer dimensions, to finally triumph over death.

Gopinath Mohanty, in addition to his novels, has also excelled in short story, some of which rank among the very best in Oriya, and stories like *Itihas* (History) *Se* (He) *Pimpudi* (Ants) and *Dwi Bira* (Two Heroes) etc. have almost become classics. The story *Pimpudi* for example, where a young officer goes to the mountainous southern border of Orissa to check rice-smuggling in a tribal market, explores the depth of individual consciousness in a vision of vast expanse where not only men labour like ants, but they also look like ants—puny and insignificant. Though

not so much in epic richness and dimension as one finds in Gopinath's stories, but no less in depth and subtlety and probably having a greater sense of intensity and intimacy, are the stories by Surendra Mohanty, Kishori Charan Das, Mahapatra Nilamoni Sahu and Manoj Das. Whereas Gopinath began writing stories from early forties, Surendra Mohanty and Mahapatra Nilamoni started writing from mid-forties, and Kishori Charan and Manoj from early fifties. Together they have written large number of stories and continue to be active even now. Though there was a strain of romanticism in Surendra Babu's early stories his later ones have a stark, naked realism which provide the basis for a deep understanding of, and keen insight into the modern man's predicament. Similarly though Nilamoni's early stories had a flair for comic and humorous elements which have always continued as structural components in his writings, his later stories have become serious analysis of contemporary existence growing even to the level of an almost prophetic-philosophic understanding. In a different way though, the stories of Kishori Charan have a delightful cosmopolitan element (he being an 'outsider', as he stayed mostly out of Orissa and even at times outside India) and they are distinguished by a strong element of irony which is conveyed at times with devastating effect. The protagonist in the stories of Manoj Das is also caught in the similar coils of modern-living. Though the stories have a parable like structure the writer probes deep into the subconscious of his characters and tries to figure them out through the complication of irony and ambivalence. Together, these writers have significantly contributed to a creative analysis of modern living and have provided a deep insight into its changes.

An intense awareness of the problems of modern man as well as an equally intense moral reaction to the conditions of modern living can also be seen in the plays of Manoranjan Das. His dramatic career began with Independence,

around 1945, when he could quickly react to the changing political scenes and the new psychological mode. In fact, that has remained as Das's strongest forte—the capacity to react to changing situations along with an ability to formulate that change in significant dramatic form. The result is continuous search for new and newer forms, which together have made Das the premier dramatist and the chief exponent of New Drama in Orissa. Das has so far written 16 plays in addition to a large number of one-acts, his latest being *Nandika Kesari*, a recreation of an old legend about an Oriya princess who betrayed her father, in the modern context—a play with bold, innovative features combining entertainment patterns from folk plays with serious purposive drama. In fact Das's evolution as a dramatist is remarkable. Beginning with politically charged early plays encompassing hopes, ambitions and disillusionment (1945-51), through exploration of the labyrinth of human psyche on the one hand and serious existential contemplation of human predicament in modern times on the other, in the mid-career plays (1967-1976), Das has come to his latest plays like *Bitarkita Aparahna* (Controversial Afternoon, 1981) and *Nandika Kesari* (1985) wherein the emphasis is on a desire for tranquility and blissful living for the tortured human soul, as well as happiness and mental sanity and health for mankind in general. Manoranjan's creative faith, like Gopinath Mohanty's, lies in his substantial insight into the nature of contemporary existence and his plays organise themselves like a metaphor of human complications in the context of a disintegrating and disinherited world.

III

As has been pointed out earlier, poetry has been the richest genre in the post-Independence Oriya literary scene. The new grounds broken by Satchidananda Routray and Guruprasad Mohanty in the fifties have borne a rich crop, and modern Oriya poetry as a whole has come to assume a

rich and complex life. One may not officially call it a New Poetry movement though in essence it has been one, and its beginning may be traced to *Nutan Kabita* (New Poetry, 1955), authored jointly by Guruprasad Mohanty and Bhanuji Rao, and its manifesto-like Introduction. It has been completely different from the earlier Oriya poetry of the twenties, thirties and forties—a move away from a uni-dimensional concentration with familiar, domestic desires, to a mocking ironical multidimensional attitude towards life and life's problems; and from the rhyming, mellifluous structure of the pre-Independence days to something close to spoken, conversational-language of everyday speech. It grew conforming to the change of taste with the change of time, and moved from the insularity of a rural and agricultural life to the expansive sophistication of an urban civilization related to the increasing techno-nuclear realities of the time. In short, it may be said that an intense consciousness involving the realities of contemporary life on the one hand, and a desire to comprehend this consciousness in a deeper and larger awareness of existence on the other, characterize the New Oriya poetry that has grown up since the fifties. Apart from the more outstanding poets discussed earlier, there are others, some of whom are comparatively younger, but sensitive, alert and very competent individually. They are Bhanuji Rao (born 1926), remarkable for his restrained tone, compact imagery and careful attention to form, and who has only two poetry collections so far —*Bisad ek Rutu*, (Despair, a season, 1973) and *Nai Aara Pari*, (On the other side of the River, 1986); Soubhagya Kumar Mishra (born 1940), who has so far six poetry collections, including *Aandha Mahumachii*, (Blind Bees, 1977), and latest *Dwa Suparna* (Two birds, 1984), a fine poet, with fine control over language, and whose understanding of modern life is both analytical and perceptive; Jagannath Prasad Das (born 1936) who has so far five poetry collections including *Je Jahara Nirjanata*

(Everybody to his loneliness, 1979) and *Aanya Desa Bhinna Samaya* (Other Country other Time, 1982), a poet delicately concerned with love and time, and passage of time, and intensely aware of loneliness, instability and death as driving forces of life; Rajendra Kishore Panda (born-1944) who has so far eight poetry collections including *Chaukathare Chirakala* (Eternally at the threshold, 1981), *Sailakalpa* (Like Rock, 1982) and *Annya* (the unique, 1988) a poet with a fine control over idiom and sensibility and with a sharp, coordinating, illuminating insight; Saurindra Barik (born 1938) who has so far four poetry-collections including *Upabharat* (Partly Bharat, 1981) and *Aakas pari Nibida* (As Intimate as the Sky, 1986), a poet whose intimate and deeply felt experiences are expressed in a quiet tone and simple, conversational language; Deepak Mishra (born 1938) who has twelve poetry-collections so far, including *Saptama Pruthibi* (The Seventh World, 1977), *Arana Mahisi* (The Wild Buffallow, 1979), *Sunyatar Sosha* (The Thirst of Emptiness, 1982) and *Dhulira Simhasan* (The Throne of Dust, 1989), a fine poet with an analytical-meditative attitude towards life; and Bibek Jena (1937-1985 two collections, *Pabanar Ghara*, the House of wind and *Smruti Satta Kimbadanti*, Memory Identify Legend), Sm Prativa Satpathy (born 1945, *Sahada Sundari*, *Niyata Basudha*, The Earth Forever, and *Mahamegha*, The Great Clouds etc.), Sarat Chandra Pradhan (born 1934, *Uchaisraba*, The Divine Horse and *Asthira Pada*, Restless Feet), Harihar Mishra (born 1940, *Ratira Duiti Dena*, Two Wings of the Night and *Lal Kadhar Tapasya*, The Penance of the Red Bud etc.), Bansidhar Sarangi (born 1940, *Samaya Asamaya*, Time on Time, *Sthavir Ashwarohi*, The Static Rider), Fani Mohanty (born 1944, *Bidagdha Hrudaya*, The Suffering Heart and *Priyatama*, The Beloved etc.), Nityananda Nayak (born 1942, *Bidirna Marala*, The Torn Swan, *Ahata Nada*, Injured Sound) as well as Nrusingha Rath (born 1935), Smt. Brahmotri Mohanty (born 1934),

Saroj Ranjan Mohanty (born 1942), Pramod Mohanty (born 1942), Haraprasad Das (born 1945), Devadas Chotray, Praharaj Satyanarayan Nanda (born 1943), Amaresh Patnaik (born 1950), Surendra Mohanty, Haraprasad Parichha Patnaik and Hrusikesh Mallik.

The above is only a selected list. There are many other young poets who together, both in poetic structure and sensibility, continue the trend of new poetry initiated in the fifties, and constitute the most important streams in the post-Independence Oriya poetry. But there are other directions too. Thus there are elder poets such as Godabarish Mahapatra (1898-1966) and Ananta Pattanaik (1910-1988) who had excellent command over form and showed socio-political involvement, which in the case of the former, developed into biting satirical poetry; and their younger inheritors, such as Rabi Singh (born 1932), Brajanath Rath (born 1936) and Prasanna Kumar Patasani (born 1947) who not only wrote 'progressive poetry' of commitment but developed a strong vivacious tone. Then there are devotional mystic poets like Smt. Nirmala Devi (1916-1987), Smt. Haripriya Devi (born 1915) and Nabakishore Das (born 1912) as well as poets of quiet romantic emotion having affinity with pastoral, agricultural life, such as Kunjabihari Das (born 1915) Pranakrushna Samal (1912-1959) Binod Nayak (born 1919), Gopal Chandra Mishra (born 1925), Janaki Ballav Mohanty (born 1925), Benudhar Rout (born 1926), Chintamani Behera (born 1928) and Bidyutprava Devi (1929-1977). Modern Oriya poetry is rich and complex and all these poets together have contributed to that total richness and complexity.

IV

As in poetry so also in short story, young, talented writers have continued to flourish. In number also they are as many as poets are, and Oriya journals every month

devote substantial portions of their space to both the genres, more to short-story than to poetry. Again like poets, the story-tellers have also continued to write against an ever growing urban consciousness and the consequent feelings of alienation. These include senior and elderly writers who wrote immediately after Independence and others who came to prominence in the sixties and seventies. Thus apart from the major story writers discussed earlier, others include first of all, such elderly writers like Rajkishore Pattanaik (born 1917) who wrote remarkably on simple emotions and situations, Nityananda Mohapatra (born 1912) who showed fine capacity to analyze human psyche in a structure of humour and irony, Bama Charan Mitra, who wrote on socio-personal themes with subtle ironical attitudes, and Godabarish Mahapatra and Anant Pattanaik, the poets, who were moved by socio-political commitments as well as by intense compassion for the poor and the miserable. Secondly, among the comparatively younger generations or among the writers who wrote subsequently, we may note storytellers such as Akhil Mohan Pattanaik, a fine writer also with left commitment, Choudhury Hemakanta Mishra, who frequently uses humour as a strong component of his tales, Satakadi Hota, a competent writer with socio-psychological attitude, Basanta Kumar Satapathy, who writes with sharp wit and humour, Durgamadhab Misra, a poet, as well whose stories have a wide social range, Achyutananda Pati who writes with socio-personal involvements, Smt. Nandini Satpathy, a noted political leader whose stories have socio-psychological features, Suryanarayan Acharya, who provides fine social analysis, Santanu Kumar Acharya, who probes competently into human consciousness, Krushna Prasad Mishra, who incorporates a delightful cosmopolitanism with urgent social problems, Chandra Sekhar Rath, who has socio-psychological motivation and communicates spiritual visions, Bijaya Krushna Mohanty, a fine writer, who presents

accounts of social life with subtle wit and satire, and Smt. Binapani Mohanty, who often deals with psychological intricacies as related to women, or we may note still younger writers of power, ability and fine promise such as Rabi Pattanaik, Rama Chandra Behera, Jagadish Mohanty, Prabhat Mahapatra, Ganeswar Mishra, Das Benhur, Smt. Jasodhara Misra, Hrushikesh Panda, Umasankar Misra, Tarunkanti Misra and Ashok Chandan (who died untimely in 1984) etc. All these writers have in their different ways been concerned with the changing patterns of life after Independence, particularly with feelings of loneliness and rootlessness as related to social, psychological and spiritual areas though they often try to hide these in a veneer of gaiety, wit and entertainment and together with the groups of poets mentioned earlier they constitute a significant part of the real strength of modern Oriya literature.

V

Novel, which happens to be a popular genre in contemporary times and which is also popular with Oriya readers, is paradoxically much less developed in comparison to poetry and short-story. This appears incomprehensible when one considers the fact that the two greatest Oriya writers of this century, that is, Phakirmohan Senapati and Gopinath Mohanty, are novelists. Their influences would have been quite beneficial as a whole. But as the case is, very few attempts have been made by subsequent writers to understand or to assess their creative strength. As a result, except marginally, they have not been able to initiate strong currents of novel writing in Oriya, and to that extent the situation may be considered unfortunate. This is more so in the case of Gopinath Mohanty, because, as the fine spirit he is, his insight, wisdom and sanity are in greater need today in these rapidly changing times. It is not to maintain of course, that novel has been a negligible

genre in post-Independence Oriya literature. On the other hand it has attracted able and strong minds, and beginning from early fifties it has gone through changes and developments. Among the early writers were Kanhu Charan Mohanty (born 1906), elder brother of Gopinath Mohanty; Surendra Mohanty, who later was distinguished as a story-teller and biographer; Nityananda Mahapatra, poet and story-teller and son of Laxmikanta Mahapatra, a distinguished writer of pre-Independence days; and Laxmidhar Nayak (born 1913). Kanhucharan, a very popular novelist, frequently wrote of social issues and problems in a flowing felicitous style. Among his well-known books are *Ha-anna* (Lo, Food !) that depicts the miseries of people consequent to the notorious 1866 famine of Orissa, *Sasti* (Punishment), a story of deep passion also in the context of the same famine, *Ka* (Shadow) depicting the passionate desires for motherhood, and *Jhanja* (The Storm) about the conflicting desires of women. In contrast to Kanhucharan, who liked to remain within immediate social problems and relationship, Surendra Mohanty had greater depth and vision, as also range. Thus in addition to novels that dealt with social issues and problems and revealed characters in psychological complications, he wrote two historical novels *Nilasaila* (The Blue Mountain) and *Niladri Vijaya* (The Conquest of Niladri), depicting the travails of an 18th century Oriya king and his relationship with Lord Jagannath of Puri, the former of which became a best-seller. He also wrote, probably the most successful Oriya political novel, entitled *Andha Diganta* (Blind Horizon) wherein in the character of Nidhi Das, a Gandhi-ite Congress worker, the political changes from 1921 to 1952, from high hopes and dreams to the atmosphere of political disillusionment and defeat and loss, have been powerfully presented and analyzed. The writer has followed his political vision even in a later novel *Neti Neti* (No, No, 1984) which has a political cum psychological structure with sharp satirical

attitudes. Nityananda Mahapatra also wrote about social issues with reference to political changes and with a reference to rural life. But his main emphasis was on communicating values and depicting ideals and morals. His distinguished novels are *Hidamati* (The Earth of Paddy Field), *Bhangahada* (Broken Bones) and *Ghara Diha* (Homestead) etc. Laxmidhar Nayak recently celebrated the completion of 50 years of his creative career. He has written prolifically. Beginning from themes of love and passion as well as social issues, he has gone over to nationalism and political chicanery and finally to problems of complicated industrial life and living. His style is as felicitous as Kanhucharana's and his depth of vision almost equals Surendra Mohanty's. Among his well-known novels are *Se Mari Nahin* (He is not Dead), *Mo Swapnar Sahar* (The City of my Dreams) and *Sei Alua Pain* (For that Light) etc.

Social issues, particularly human relationship and the complications inside a family and among its members, have always attracted Oriya novelists. A remarkable novel, published in the late fifties, was *Amadabata* (The Untrodden Way) by Ms. Basanta Kumari Pattanaik. The novel deals with a middle class family at Cuttack and the family's attempts to get the unmarried daughter married. The novel begs comparison with the novels of Jane Austen and the daughter Maya reminds Elizabeth Bennet. The sincerity and sympathy, as well as insight and sanity, as seen in the novel, have not been frequently repeated in Oriya novels. Ms. Pattanaik's brother, Rajkishor Pattanaik, a senior and more prolific writer, also writes of social problems with apt psychological analysis, his well-known novel being *Chalabata* (The Trodden Path). But the most extensive use of psychological analysis has been made by Santanu Kumar Acharya, a younger writer (born 1933). His range is also good. Beginning from a symbolic novel *Narakinnar* (Man, Half man, 1962) he has gone over to autobiographical novels,

Satabdhira Nachiketa (Nachiketa of the Century) and *Tinoti Ratira Sakala* (The Mornings of Three Nights), and later to political themes (*Sakuntala*). Acharya has understanding and insight that often move beyond what is on the surface to essential substantiality. In a complementary way psychological probings can also be seen in the novels of Krushna Prasad Mishra (born 1933). But they have an extra dimension in that they are wedded to philosophical visions. Thus Mishra's novels like *Sinhakati* (The Lion-Waist), *Mrugatrushna* (The Mirage) and *Nepathey* (In the Background) have psychologically symbolic structures with philosophic overtones. Chandrasekhar Rath, otherwise known as a story teller and essayist, wrote a few novels, the first of which was *Jantrarudha* (Riding a Machine), which had an unusual subject matter related to a temple-priest and was written in a rugged colloquial language of the southern Orissa. In this connection reference may be made to Dayalal Joshi, who comes from Western Orissa and writes his novels incorporating Western Orissa dialect, the two well known novels being *Sutlezru Zira* (From Satlez to Zira) and *Banamalati* (The Forest Flower). Joshi is a Gandhi-ite and he upholds Gandhian ideals of honesty, sacrifice and goodness in his novels. Kanhucharan wrote prolifically about a large number of social and familial issues and as a consequence was acclaimed as the most popular writer in the fifties and sixties. Today, in the seventies and eighties, his popularity has been rivalled by Bibhuti Pattanaik, Smt. Prativa Roy and Smt. Gayatri Basu Mallik. They all write with an easy felicity and bring up various contemporary social and familial problems with sympathy and intelligence and together they provide a competent cross-section of urbanized and urban-oriented modern Oriya life. Some novels that may be mentioned in this connection are *Chapala Chhanda*, *Badhu Nirupama*, *Kesabati Kannya* etc. by Bibhuti Pattanaik, *Kaberi* and *Madhabir Madhurati* (The Bridal Night of Madhabi) by Smt. Gayatri Basumallick, and *Janjnaseni*

(Yanjnaseni), a fictional and absorbing account of the life of Draupadi, the Pandava Queen, by Smt. Prativa Roy.

VI

Reference has already been made to Manoranjan Das as the most important modern dramatist, and it has been pointed out how his career spans the period since 1945. In the early part of his career the dramatists who came to prominence and in a way contributed substantially to Oriya drama were Bhanja Kishor Pattanaik, Ram Chandra Mishra, Gopal Chhotroy and Basanta Kumar Mahapatra. They were individually able dramatists, had complete command over their form and were eminently successful on the stage. They highlighted various aspects of contemporary social and socio-political problems and tried to expose many evils. Some of their plays were *Mulia* (The Labourer), *Bhaibhauja* (The Brother and Sister-in-law) and *Gharasansar* (The Household) etc. by Ramchandra Mishra; *Gariba* (The Poor), *Manikjodi* (The Even Two) and *Jayamalya* (Victory Garland) etc. by Bhanja Kishor Pattanaik, *Bharasa* (Support), *Parakalam* (The Pen), *Sankhasindura* (The Bangles and Vermillion) and *Ardhangini* (Second Half) by Gopal Chhotroy and *Sesasrabana* (The End of Rains) and *Jharafula* (Fallen Flowers) by Basanta Kumar Mahapatra. But as they almost always wrote against a conventional stage-setting and in a chronicle and narrative frame, they could not exactly communicate the new sensibility which was in evidence in poetry and short-story. This was done to a large extent by a group of younger dramatists who got associated with Manoranjan Das in his later career. They were Biswajit Das, Bijoy Mishra, Ramesh Panigrahi, Kartik Ch. Rath, Bana Behari Panda, and J. P. Das, and some of their plays were, *Sababahakamane* (The Pall-Bearers), *Duiti Surya dagdha Phulaku nei* (About Two Sunburnt Flowers) and *Tata Niranjana* etc. by Bijoy Mishra, *Nisipadma* (The Nightly Blossom) and *Mrugaya* (The Hunt) by Biswajit

Das, *Mu Ambhe O Amemane* (Myself, Ourselves and All of us), and *Jane Mahaparusanka Janma Mrutu Samparkare* (About a Great man's Birth and Death) by Ramesh Panigrahi, *Trutiya Pruthibi* (Third World) by Kartik Ch. Rath, *Suryasta Purbaru* (Before the Sunset) by J. P. Das, and *Amamananka Bhitare* (Among us) by B. B. Panda. These dramatists brought newness in theme and structure, and were responsible, along with Manoranjan, to revolutionize the traditional stage-technique in Orissa.

Two other genres where some significant contribution have been made are Essay and Autobiography. Essay or general prose had a rich growth before Independence and it was easy to make a long list of writers who wrote with distinction and were responsive to the prevalent intellectual climate. The persons of comparable merit today are not many, yet they do react intelligently and imaginatively to the changing patterns of life as well as to its multiple complications. These writers are Chittaranjan Das, Manmohan Chaudhury, Bhubaneswar Behera, Mahapatra Nilamani Sahu, Manoj Das, Sadasiv Mishra and Chandrasekhar Rath.

Significantly autobiography has been a rich genre after Independence. It provides documentation as well as points of view to contemporary situations. Some of the competent autobiographies published after Independence are by Godabaris Mishra, Nilkantha Das, Bharat Nayak, Kalicharan Pattanaik, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, Kunja Behari Das, Udayanath Sarangi, Rama Debi, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, and Surendranath Dwibedi. There are many more, and this genre needs special study, particularly as source-study, for the contemporary times.

In a way post-Independence Oriya literature is a continuation of what happened before. But essentially it is a radical departure from the past and has thrown up new views and attitudes that were never thought of before. They

are compactly woven with the changes in time and the period as a whole is both a product of and reaction to the contemporary techno-nuclear age, that has been affecting the modern man's life in so many ways.



MODERN ORIYA DRAMA

In a general way one can say that Independence brought in new trends and new attitudes in Oriya drama. Not only social, cultural and political situations changed, but also, generally, the conditions of living changed, and people's taste, sensibility and attitudes underwent almost radical transformations. Thus the theatre-goer quickly lost interest in traditional historical and mythological plays, and a craving grew for plays with contemporary relevance. Both older and senior dramatists like Kalicharan Pattanaik and Ramachandra Mishra as well as comparatively junior and new dramatists like Manoranjan Das and Gopal Chhotroy responded to this new taste and for about 10 years after Independence, till about 1958, one could feel new sensations and a type of new excitement as regards drama writing and production.

Kalicharan had written a number of plays before Independence out of which three plays may be particularly noted. They were *Girl School* and *Chumban* (Kiss) both of which were staged in 1942, and *Bhata* (Rice) which was staged in 1944. All the three plays brought in new themes related to contemporary social problems, poverty and class conflict. The plays had songs and other entertaining features. But on the whole they initiated a new seriousness and alertness on the part of the spectators. This trend was continued in Kalicharan in at least 3 plays that he wrote after Independence. The plays were *Raktamati* (Blood Stained Earth), *Raktamandar* (Red Oleander) and *Abhijan* (The Invasion). The plays grew out of an intense awareness of hard realities, though structurally the last two plays had historical structure and the first confined itself to a presentation of class conflict and an exposure of how the powerful dominates the weak. Ramachandra Mishra's

important plays were staged in a period of 8 to 10 years after Independence. They were *Mulja* (The Labourer), *Gharasansar* (The Household), *Sai padisa* (The Neighbours) and *Bhaibhauja* (The Brother and Sister-in-law). The plays generally dealt with the conflict of villages with the new towns and the many allurements of urban living as against simple village life. As in Kalicharan's play, so also here, there has been a strong awareness of contemporary realities, though the emphasis all along has been on goodness, grace and amity.

Similarly the new trends were enriched and augmented by Manoranjan Das and Gopal Chhotroy. Manoranjan's first play was staged in 1943, but his more important plays at that time, such as *August Na*, *Agami* (The Oncoming), *Baxi Jagabandhu* and *Abarodha* (The Seige) were all written and staged between 1947 and 1953. The plays were eloquent testimony of the change in taste that was coming over the theatre-goers at that time. The general emphasis was on changes that came in immediate socio-political conditions after Independence with the difference that the awareness of newness and change became an integral part of the psychological atmosphere in the plays, wherein emotions as related to hopes, dreams, aspirations as well as despair and loss of hope, provided essential strength to the total dramatic structure. Thus whereas *August Na*, staged in 1947, dealt with the 'Quit India' movement of 1942 and showed the sacrifice of the youth towards realizing the dreams of freedom and democracy, *Abarodha*, staged in 1953, showed the loss of these dreams and the consequent despair in the widening coils of self interest, greed and deception in politics. Even *Baxi Jagabandhu*, which had historical context and dealt with the 1817 uprising in Orissa against the British, dealt with hopes and dreams and the loss of these in the final massacre. Gopal Chhotroy also started writing after Independence, and mention may be made particularly of

his 4 plays, *Bharasa* (Support), *Parakalam* (The Feathered Pen), *Sankhasindura* (Bangles and Vermillion) and *Ardhangini* (The Better-Half), all written and staged between 1952 and 1956. Whereas *Bharasa* dealt with the life of an artist and his problems related to love and idealistic principles, and *Sankhasindura* with such negative emotions as doubt, distrust and contempt in the context of a family, *Ardhangini* was a psychological treatment of a mother's apprehension about the loss of her only child. But *Parakalam* had a political theme and mercilessly exposed the dirty manoeuvrings of contemporary politics. Both Manoranjan Das and Chottroy brought new powers to Oriya drama and beginning from the end of the fifties onwards, Manoranjan particularly, helped it towards substantial achievement.

Two events, coming one after another, helped to crystalize this process. The first happened between 1955 and 1958, when the Dramatic Society of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, staged 4 plays in Oriya, based on Hauptman's *Weaver*, Galsworthy's *Strife*, Chekov's *Cherry Orchard*, and Ostrovosky's *The Diary of a Scoundrel*, in four consecutive years. The plays were adapted by J. M. Mohanty and the guiding spirit was B. Das, the then Head of the Department of English in the College, who took immense care for production of the plays which became resounding successes year after year. The second event happened between 1963 and 1969, when what was done by Ravenshaw College Dramatic Society within academic precincts for largely academic audience, was taken up for much larger audience by amateur groups, that staged newer plays adapted from western drama along with original ones. The most important of these groups was Srujani, which was organized by young men and women who had participated in the activities of Ravenshaw College Dramatic Society as well as by others who had been inspired by the same. Srujani's plays were staged in Cuttack, in public halls, and

in quick succession. They not only generated a lot of enthusiasm all around, but while initiating newer experiences and establishing newer tasks, they almost radically changed the total structure of Oriya drama. The guiding spirits were Manoranjan Das, two of whose original plays, *Banahansi* (Wild Swan) and *Klanta Projapati* (Tired Butterfly) were staged by the group, and Anant Mahapatra, who directed all the plays.

In fact Manoranjan Das is probably the most significant dramatist today in Orissa, and his long creative career beginning from early forties, has again and again projected changes and trends in drama as no body else's has. Early in his career, as already pointed out, he wrote powerful, passionate plays by way of analyzing contemporary socio-political situations. This he followed up in the fifties by writing one-act plays on diverse themes, from socio-political to psychological. But beginning from early sixties Manoranjan went back to full and longer plays, and moving out of socio-political confines he sounded the depths of human psyche and probed into the problems of existence in a manner which initiated still newer trends and responses in Oriya drama.

The dramas of Manoranjan which need special mention in this connection are, *Aranya Phasal* (The Wild Harvest) which incidentally got Sahitya Akademi Award in 1972, *Kathaghoda* (The Wooden Horse), *Sabdalipi* (The Word-Script), *Bitarkita Aparahna* (The Controversial Afternoon) and the latest *Nandika Kesari*. These plays were written in a period of about 15 years ranging from 1970 to 1985, and dispensing with the traditional stage-structures they evolved forms of their own, freely borrowing from both urban and folk ways of living. Thematically the plays were developed and organized round single perceptions related to different aspects of the present day individual's complex living, particularly the problems of his alienated self. Thus a play

like *Aranya Phasal* dealt with loss of communication, where five people, bogged down in a remote dak-bungalow, found it difficult to communicate with each other and were reduced to monosyllables and partial utterances. Similarly *Kathaghoda* and *Sabdalipi* dealt respectively with loss of identity and loss of existence. In short, these plays had symbolic significance and in different ways they pointed to one direction, that is, how or to what extent the present day living is devoid of fundamentals of life. Whereas *Aranya Phasal*'s structure was borrowed from the tradition of Absurd play in the West, and *Kathaghoda* utilized the techniques of folkopera, *Sabdalipi* evolved its own structure which moved in concentric circles from a point of existence to non-existence; and as time was comprehended as a flux, innumerable items of life continually bubbled up in that flux only to vanish immediately after. Manoranjan's contemplations about life has continued in his two latest plays—*Bitarkita Aparahna* (1981) and *Nandika Kesari* (1985). The former was apparently a social play where three generations were linked to highlight the inevitable corroding of certain basic values of life on the one hand and the emergence of a newer understanding about life on the other. The latter was apparently a historical play as it dealt with a popular legend from Orissa's past and adopted a folk form of dance and songs. But more significantly the plays dealt with a dream or a desire—the desire for a greater amity, friendliness, grace, in short, for an alert, wholesome, happy life which finally got shattered and lost. Both the plays had symbolic implications with covert ironical attitudes and they showed the dramatist's contemplations about human existence in a larger social and human perspective.

Manoranjan's lead was effectively taken up by younger dramatists in the late sixties, seventies and early eighties, and at the same time they went beyond it. The names to be

mentioned in this connection are Bijoy Mishra and Biswajit Das particularly, and Ramesh Chandra Panigrahi, Kartik Chandra Rath, Jagannath Prasad Das, Harihar Mishra, Ratnakar Chaini, and Ban Behari Panda. Bijoy Mishra had begun his career with traditional, though well-written plays, with emphasis on story and contemporary social and socio-political themes. But he made his mark conclusively in 1968 with an unusual play *Sababahaka Mane* (The Pall-Bearers). It has no story or sequence of events. It records only human reactions provoked by a particular motivation, that is, greed, and to that extent it is almost like a parable. The dead body waiting to be buried in a ruined, lonely house, which initiates action in a stormy night and justifies the title, ceases to be an external object to be carried by the pall-bearers indifferently, and becomes a part of the pall-bearers who in fact carry along their own deadness. The play is like a sudden realization of an aspect of living which is highly unpalatable and unbecoming, and counters the idea of man as a sentient and wholesome being. Two subsequent plays, *Duiti Suryadagdha Phulaku Nei* (About Two Sun-burnt flowers) and *Tata Niranjana* (The Shores of Niranjana) continue the dramatist's preoccupation with death-in-life, and the futile attempts of the protagonists to be free and released. In the former, which has a social base, the protagonists shrivel like sun-burnt flowers and in the latter, in the frame of a Buddhistic fable, it is realized that attempts to renounce the world of suffering, illusion and death are meaningless as what is obtained instead is equally uncertain and illusory.

Biswajit's plays had also traditional elements in the beginning. But again like Bijoy he also placed greater emphasis on motivations and perceptions. *Nisipadma* (The Lotus of the Night) written in 1957, was an early significant play where veneer had been taken off from man's underlying self only to expose raw nakedness within. The same pre-occupation, that is, to see man as he really is, through

all his decorations, continued in Biswajit's subsequent plays, such as *Nija Pratinidhink Tharu* (From One's Own Representative), *Nalipana Rani O Kalapana Tika* (The Queen of Hearts and Ace of Spades) and *Suna Sujane* (Hear, O Wisemen) till one comes to *Mrugaya* (The Hunt, 1970), which conveys in poignant language the immense futility and rootlessness which hunt the modern man. Biswajit's plays have strong psychological atmosphere and they are motivated towards an equally strong spectator-participation. His is a powerful voice, restless and agonized, and probably most eloquent among the young dramatists in its attempts to come to terms with futility and despair, which characterise the modern life.

In addition to Bijoy and Biswajit, the names of the relatively more prominent among the younger dramatists have been mentioned already. Some of their important plays may be noted here. Thus the plays are, *Mu Ambhe O Ambhemane* (I Myself, Us and We All), *Jane Mahapurusk Janma Mrutu Samparkare* (In Connection with a Great Man's Birth and Death) and *Dhrutarastrara Akhi* (The Eyes of Dhrutarastra) by Ramesh Chandra Panigrahi, all of which have ironical attitudes and deal with the individual's sense of dislocation and uncertainty related to matters of existence. *Swargadwar* (The Heavenly Gate), *Trutiya Pruthibi* (The Third World), and *Banhiman* (Aflamed) by Kartik Chandra Rath, deal with deception, bestiality, and inequality as well as with agony and emptiness; and *Suryasta Purbaru* (Before the Sunset) and *Sabasesa Loka* (The Last Man) by Jagannath Prasad Das deal with waste and decay in the context of a life without meaning and purpose. Similarly plays such as *He Nisada Nibruta Hua* (Oh Hunter, Please Stop), *Punascha Pruthibi* (Again Earth) and *Arannya* (The Jungle) by Harihar Mishra, Ratnakar Chaini and Ban Behari Panda respectively, through mythological, political and social references also portray the essential uncertainty and aimlessness of life. Besides these, one may

also note the names of dramatists such as Bhanjakishor Pattanaik, and Kamal Lochana Mohanty, who mainly wrote in the fifties, and Basanta Kumar Mohapatra, Pranabandhu Kar, and Jadunath Das Mohapatra, who wrote subsequently also contributed to the main trends, as related to social exposure and individual distress in their own ways. What has been of significance in Oriya drama during the last about 40 years, since Independence, is the continuous emergence of new and newer dramatists. As the taste and attitudes of people have changed with the change in living conditions, the dramatists have responded accordingly, and with great ability and competence. The dramas have been staged either by professional groups, as was the case with the plays of Kalicharan, Ramachandra, Bhanja Kishore or Chottroy, or by innumerable amateur groups as was with the plays of Manoranjan, Bijoy, and Biswajit, both in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. In short, while concluding, one may point out that the modern Oriya drama has been shaped, first of all, by attitudes which are cosmopolitan and are in direct response to the changing patterns of life in the later 20th century, and secondly, by structures which are rooted in the folk and community life of a people who are moving from an agriculture-based community to an employment and urban based industrial society.

MODERN ORIYA POETRY

What is considered as Modern Oriya Poetry is broadly speaking, about 100 years old now as one can trace its beginnings in the last quarter of the 19th century. The first major poet was Radhanath Ray who was born in 1848 in Balasore district in northern Orissa and died in 1908. He belonged to a Bengali family that had earlier settled in Balasore and his early poetical compositions were in Bengali which he later changed to Oriya. Though Orissa was at that time a part of Bengal Presidency, western education came to Orissa at a later stage and it was towards the middle of the nineteenth century that new ideas and a new spirit of education emerged more particularly in the slowly developing urban areas of Orissa. Professionally Radhanath was a teacher and a teacher-administrator—he became the Inspector and chief of Orissa Education in 1901. His poetic efforts were in part the products of the compulsions of his job or more broadly the compulsions of the time—the need to cater to a taste different from what had hitherto grown up on traditional poetry or traditional literature. In fact this was Radhanath's greatest significance as a writer. He not only responded to this change in taste, but himself, most successfully, established this new taste in the form of new literature on which subsequently the entire edifice of modern Oriya poetry was built.

Radhanath mainly wrote long poems. These were both narrative and descriptive and he frequently mixed up both. Most important of these was *Mahajatra* (The Last Journey) which was published in 1896 and was dedicated by the publisher to Sri R. C. Dutta, the famous Bengali writer and administrator. The poet had designed to finish it in 30 cantoes but could only complete seven. It was

planned to be an epic and the poet's models were *Paradise Lost* of Milton and *Meghanada Badha* of Michael Madhusudan Dutta. The poem was written in blank verse, the first such use in Oriya. It dealt with the last exit of the Pandavas, their journey from place to place, and how by the grace of the Fire-God at the top of the Sahyadri mountains (in the Vindhya range) they got a glimpse of the future of India to the point when the country would be possessed by the followers of Devil (*Kali*) and would be overrun by the Muslim invaders. The poem begins by making references to the long wanderings of the Pandavas who had come at last to the sea-coast at Puri (*Nilachal*) where the Fire-God met them rising out of the sea. The description was graphic—"In the eternal blue of the watery wilderness, seeing the eternal play of the dancing waves, when the heroes were shocked to silence, suddenly, out of the waves, rose he—shining with light, garlanded with fire, a burning figure, blinding the seas, and the deer in the distant sands ran away swiftly with great fear. He stood—that beaming, divine person—and addressed them." Subsequently the Fire-God conducted them through different parts of Orissa to the top of Sahyadri where a future vision was granted to them. It was a vision of great fear and evil. The *Kali* descends and all his followers accompany him, like Satan and his followers descending on earth—"As he said the sky was filled with great darkness, and monstrous, fearsome shapes danced along. And then *Kali* descended from above, and all his followers. And his eyes flashed ominous, like the tail-end of a huge comet, and he burned red like mars, and equally fearful. His sharp teeth moved as if in the whirlwind of a mouth, like the evermoving jaw of death..." The followers of *Kali*, beginning from *Kama* or Sex to *Alasya* or Laziness are described in detail, and the God points out how ultimately this country of great courage, heritage and beauty will be drowned in a great flood of sin and will soon be laid to

devastation, and men will be worse than animals—“Soon the unity will be sacrificed, and this country will depend on others, like slaves, happy, in their petty self interest..... The Aryas will be deprived of their own land and the invaders will come from a distance, like bees stealing honey, and they will suck whatever is best in India, and the Aryas, like coward village-dogs, will quarrel among themselves for remnants.” At the end the Pandavas are shown how the Muslim invaders would conquer the Hindu army of Pruthiraj and the Sun of India’s independence will set. In fact, *Mahajatra* even in its incomplete form is a powerful work. Even though it has continuous mythological as well as historical references as parts of its structure, its content was essentially contemporary—a great resentment against the outsiders and an equally acute unhappiness that this great country fails to rise up and take its lawful place in the committee of nations. One important aspect of *Mahajatra’s* structure, it may be pointed out, remains rooted in Orissa, that is, the poem gives a comprehensive account of Orissa, its many places and persons and its manifold beauties of nature—a type of poetic preoccupation that was never seen in Oriya poetry before.

This last aspect is best seen in *Chilika*, a descriptive poem about the lake Chilika, in the eastern coast, at a distance of about 40 miles towards south of Puri. The poem was published in 1892, and it gives a detail-account of many places in and around Chilika as well as its remarkable natural beauty. The poem begins with an invocation of Chilika where it is spoken of as the most beautiful ornament of Utkal (Orissa) and then goes over to picture its vast blue water, innumerable migratory birds, innumerable colourful fishes, picturesque islands, jutting mountains crowding like playful children, overhanging forests all along the coast hiding small, quiet villages, and the continual play of light and darkness, and the change of seasons. This is how the

poet describes the time when the sun sets over Chilika—
 “Now Lord Sun sets his golden throne on the top of Valery
 in the west. As the long shadows fall on hills the yellow
 turns to blue. As the cattle return home the noise of bells
 round their necks fill the valley and echo in the forest-path.
 The smoke rises from the hamlets below and curls through
 the forest. The white-feathered *eras* leave the lake to find
 their nests in the forest, and their wings look golden as the
 yellow setting sun falls on them”. Elsewhere he describes
 the moonlight and the coming of night—“The white moon-
 light falls on vast blue expanse of Chilika even to the
 distant horizon. The fishermen’s boats now dot the eastern
 line. They have seen the evening stars on Valery, and as
 they return home from the sea their happy songs float lazily
 over Chilika. The spirit of the songs moves over blue water
 and vanishes in white moonlight. All around in sweet moon-
 light the sweet maidens laugh and sing...Now the night has
 come; the noise is no more; the earth is quiet. The waves of
 moonlight have flooded the sky, earth, and water, and all look
 as if washed in mercury. The hills, the islands, the forests,
 the trees, the leaves and stones—everywhere moonlight falls
 and glitters. The chequered forest looks like the body of a
 snake. The hills and the forests are quiet; men do not move;
 only the cricket sings; only the distant stream murmurs. The
 night deepens. The peace reigns everywhere.” *Chilika* has
 other references too, such as, to the past glory of Orissa
 when the ships used to go out from Chilika to distant lands.
 But it mainly remains as a descriptive poem, describing
 nature’s beauties—rivers, streams, hills, forests, birds,
 seasons etc, all related to a particular locality, woven
 around Chilika as the central figure. In fact this conscious-
 ness of Orissa, not simply as a geographical entity, but
 living, shining with colour and beauty, rich and healthy,
 formed a major aspect of Radhanath’s poetry and opened
 new directions for the subsequent generation of poets. But
 reversely the poet is also biting satirical and in contrast

to the beauty and coherence of nature which almost always remains as a separate entity he almost mercilessly exposed the incoherence and ugliness of human beings. His poem *Darabar* (The Court) is the best example.

Darabar was published in 1897, being the last of his major poems and the only poem to deal directly with the contemporary Oriya society. The occasion was the gathering of feudatory kings of Orissa as well as other people, particularly the rich, at Cuttack, to felicitate the new Lt. Governor of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. But the emphasis is not on any simple narration of events or sequences of events. On the other hand the whole poem is in the manner of a commentary and analysis of people's manners as well as their way of life. The followers of *Kali* as visualized in *Mahajatra* are manifested here in people who have come to pay court to the new Governor and receive titles. In a context of pomp and opulence where vehicles crowd, guns boom and kings move slowly with their retinues, the poet's attention is arrested by the smallness as well as unethical and immoral conduct of men. Hence naturally his voice becomes full of resentment—"The old men grow mad for positions, like children for toys; they fight as children fight for sweetmeats." Some flaunt their high positions, some their long heritage, whereas others boast that they are commanders of army and killers of men ("These hands have played with innumerable heads and burnt numberless villages, and the queen gave me medals. Tell me, who is greater?"). The picture of police is interesting—"And he says, 'I am the police; I can create a thunder without a cloud; whether innocent or guilty, everybody is afraid of me; and whether poor, destitute or a millionair, who is not afraid of the red-turban? Who does not shiver seeing me? Who fears not the hissing snake? The king has complete faith in me; I am the greatest.'" Elsewhere it is a complete moral castiga-

tion of the foibilities of men and a reminder that ultimately the judgments will be different and will be based on now ignored criteria of virtue and goodness. Therefore the final poetic vision is one of understanding and wisdom—"Don't rot yourself in the dark hole of pride. Rise slowly to the hill of *dharma*. In the eyes of *dharma* all things of the world are equal, as trees below appear equal from a hill-top. Sit there, on the hill of *dharma*, alone, always, and see how the world spins around you." One source of *Darabar*, specially in its approaches and attitudes, may be traced to English poetry, particularly to Pope and the Augustan satirical poetry. But the poet's emphasis on morality and goodness, and particularly on the inevitable equalizer at the end, can be seen as being central to Indian thought and approach to life. At the sametime the poem's exposition of evil in man can be seen as a major preoccupation of the poet, though in *Darabar* it is probably clearest and most forceful. We have seen how it was visualized in *Mahajatra*. It remains in the background of *Chilika*, and it can be variously traced in the narrative sequences of his other long poems written before *Darabar*.

Such poems are, *Kedargauri* (Kedar and Gauri, 1886) *Chandrabhaga* (Chandrabhaga, 1886), *Nandikesari* (Nandikesari, 1887), *Usha* (Usha, 1888), *Parbati* (Parbati, 1892), *Jajati Kesari* (Jajatikesari, 1895), and *Urbasi* (Urbasi, 1897). These poems have a number of interesting aspects. First of all, the story-sequences in most of these poems have been borrowed from the West. Thus *Kedargauri* is based on the tragic story of Pyramus and Thisbee, *Chandrabhaga* on Appollo's pursuit of Daphne and *Usha* on Atlanta's race. Besides, *Nandikesari* has echoes of Ovid and Byron, *Parbati* of Aeschylus and Shakespeare and *Jajatikesari* of Ovid. Secondly inspite of borrowings and echoes, all these stories as well as characters and their actions have been completely integrated in Orissa's history, geography and local environment so much so that in subsequent years

legends have grown up relating to places mentioned by the poet. In this these poems are at par with *Mahajatra* and *Chilika*—an intense consciousness of Orissa as a living being providing a very powerful motive force in all these poems. A good example where both these aspects have been mixed up may be seen in *Parbatī* where a message of victory is conveyed through bonfires set up on hill-tops in a chain dotting a distance of about 200 miles from the north where the King of Orissa was fighting for victory, to his capital at Puri. The distinct inspiration is from *Agamemnon* where a similar action may be seen conveying the victory at Troy at the end of the battle. But what is interesting is the description of the way the mountains and forests of north and central Orissa come alive in a grand, panoramic sweep. All on a sudden they become a part of the vast landscape of the moonlit-night of the full-moon which finally merges with sea at Puri. But probably the most important aspect of these poems is seen in their themes. The themes are the variations of one theme, that is, the theme of love, or more particularly the failure in love. It has different contexts in different poems. Thus in *Kedargaurī* the context is social, in *Chandrabhaga* psychological, in *Nandikesari* political, in *Parbatī* moral and in *Usha* and *Urbasi* supernatural. In all the poems the failure has led to one end—a tragic end, and death. Thus in *Chandrabhaga* and *Nandikesari* the heroins die, in *Kedargaurī* and *Usha* both the hero and heroine die, and in *Parbatī* all die. Two exceptions are *Urbasi* and *Jajatikesari*. But *Urbasi*, which narrates the story of Pururaba and Urbasi, is short and incomplete, and anyway in the mythological story the love ends in separation. In *Jajatikesari*, though the hero and the heroine get married at the end through divine interference, yet the sword of death continued to hang on them throughout the poem and might have fallen on them any moment. At a deeper level the poet's preoccupation with failure—the

failure as seen in the story-character dimensions—is related to his more fundamental preoccupation with evil as operating in life and as a part of it. In the major poems, that is, in *Mahajatra*, *Darabara* and *Chilika* it is seen as operating in time and space, from socio-political analysis to meditations of past, present and future, and mainly as an independent entity. In these poems it is related to specific poetic operations and grows along with the theme. But even within limitations, as one watches it grow from *Kedargauri* to *Parbati*, it grows in increasing intensity, till in the later it becomes one bleak, devastating existence where human life is reduced to infelicity and incompassion.

Radhanath effected a change in taste and approaches as well as in literary sensibility and style, and to that extent he was a major poet in the sense Eliot called Dryden and Wordsworth as major poets of English literature. But at a different level, particularly in his contemplation of human predicament not only as related to socio-cultural situations immediately, but to larger spheres of the growth of civilization and its attendant evils, his perception was acute. In this he was at par with his friend and fellow-writer Phakir Mohan Senapati, the novelist, and they together were responsible for the subsequent growth of newness and modernity in Oriya literature.

II

Radhanath's friend, contemporary and fellow-poet and whose name was most frequently associated with his own, was Madhusudan Rao (1853-1912) who belonged to a domiciled Maharastrian family of Orissa. His father Bhagirathi Rao worked in the Police Department as a Zamandar but Madhusudan, after completing his education at Cuttack began his career as a school teacher (1871) and slowly rose to become a member of Indian Educational Service and Additional Inspector of Orissa Division (1908). Thus

like Radhanath, Madhusudan also played a major role in shaping Orissa's education at a formative stage towards the later part of the nineteenth century, and his activities as a poet were partly due to his involvement in the new process of learning and enlightenment. Added to this he accepted Brahmo faith which contributed a meditative and contemplative outlook to his life and poetry. Madhusudan wrote long poems. But he excelled in short lyrics and sonnets and his poetry as a whole was responsible, as Radhanath's was not, in inculcating a mystico-religious structure into Oriya poetry.

Madhusudan's poems were mainly written and published between 1875 and 1908. Most of his lyrics or short poems were collected in 6 volumes. They were as follows : 1. *Kabitabali* (Poems, 1875) containing 10 poems, 2. *Chhandamala* (A Garland of Rhymes, 1880-81), First part, and Second part, which together consisted of 30 poems, 3. *Basantagatha* (The Ballads of Spring, 1901) which contained 27 poems, 4. *Kusumanjali* (Flower Offerings, 1903) containing 11 poems, 5. *Utkalagatha* (The Ballads of Utkal, 1908) having 7 poems, and finally, 6. *Bibidhakabita* (Miscellaneous Poems) containing only 11 poems. In addition he wrote a bunch of poems for children, a group of elegies, about 100 songs, and a semi-mystical poem entitled *Himachale Udaya Utchaba* (The Festival of Rising Sun in the Himalayas). When seen together the poems show three main poetic-responses. One relates to mysticism or a poetic understanding of a divine existence in man's life and living. Second relates to nature and a sensitiveness to natural units like sky, river, trees, flowers or even rural nature. The third is an expression of patriotic sentiments relating to the poet's own nation and country. Madhusudan differs from Radhanath in the sense that his tone is not as intense or his involvement as acute or even his range as wide as in Radhanath. Most of Madhusudan's poems maintain a level-tone and a contemplative-

meditative structure for which he is popularly known as *Bhaktakabi* or the 'Devotee-poet'.

Himachale Udaya Utchab is an illustrative poem of the first type. It refers to the breaking of dawn in the Himalayas and how the light spreads from the sky to the hills and how it affects the feelings of the poet raising them to a grand union with the soul of nature, and to a final perception of an immense beauty in the created universe, almost in the manner of Wordsworth's feelings about a living spirit in nature which rolls through all things and all objects. The poet's mystic understanding is best seen in the perception of a union with the Eternal Soul out of which flows unique beauty and happiness—"The strange and mysterious touch feels my heart with great happiness; a paradise like incense spills from the arbours of my soul with the happiness of spring; and my soul, my beginning and my end, are all immersed in that eternal fountain of beauty that has no beginning and no end." A separate poem, *Nadi Prati* (To the River) is representative of the poet's sensitiveness to nature's beauty. The poem narrates the flow of a river from its source in the mountains to its final confluence with the sea. It is mainly objective in its details, pointing to various scenes, objects, human situations as well as obstructions it meets on the way. Its final union with the sea is interesting as it is suggestive of the human life like a river meeting Eternity at the end. The poet's patriotic sentiments are seen in his poems about Orissa (Ref. *Utkalgatha*) where he praises Mother Utkal with all her beauty and glory, and invokes mankind to give up narrowness and be one in love and understanding. On the whole the poet's continuous emphasis on human values and the quality of contemplation has earned him a great deal of respect which has hardly been surpassed with reference to other Oriya poets in the last 80 years.

The other important contemporary poet of Radhanath was Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924). Gangadhar was born

in the Sambalpur district in the western Orissa and though junior in age yet he was a close friend of Radhanath and his poetry was influenced by Radhanath's poetry. Gangadhar was born in a weaver's family and did not have much formal education though he self-educated himself in Sanskrit, Bengali and ancient Oriya literature. The result is that his poetry does not have the sophistication and ingenuity one finds in Radhanath's poetry and in comparison simpler, more musical, and in manner and approach more inclined towards ancient Oriya poetry. At the same time whereas Radhanath borrowed his themes from the West, Gangadhar's sources were in Indian mythology and Sanskrit literature. Gangadhar wrote long narrative poems as well as short poems. But like Radhanath and unlike Madhusudan he excelled in longer poems.

His first important narrative poem was *Indumati* (1893) which dealt with the story of King Aja of Ayodha and his queen Indumati. Subsequently he wrote *Kichakabadha* (The Killing of Kichak, 1903), *Padmini* (Padmini, 1911), *Tapaswini* (The Nun, 1914), and *Pranayaballari* (The Creepers of Love, 1915). All these were long narrative poems and the poet's reputation since has largely rested on these. The first poem *Indumati* is in two parts, and the story is taken from *Raghuvansa* of Kalidas. But many local details have been added to it including references to nature's beauties, and it is written in a simple, racy language. The story of the next book *Kichakabadha* is taken from the Mahabharat and it deals with the advances of Kichak to Draupadi and the death of Kichak at the hands of Bhimasen. It is in seven cantos and full of imaginative details and dramatic turn of events. The language is simple and musical. The next book *Tapaswini* is the poet's best work and one of the best poetical works in Oriya literature. It is also one of the most popular due to its simple and immensely lyrical language. It is in 11 cantos and deals with

the life of Sita during banishment at Valmiki's hermitage. Although the general structure is taken from the Ramayana it is largely an original work. This originality is seen in the arrangement of sequences in the cantos in imagining nature as a living being, and in assessing Sita's feelings in an atmosphere of deep pathos and compassion. Besides the poet is keen to establish moral attitudes to life which he does by projecting physical and moral beauties of Sita. In *Pranayaballari*, his last published narrative poem, the poet has once again taken from Kalidas—from the drama *Sakuntala*. The poem is in seven cantos and the emphasis is on love—the birth of love in Sakuntala, its flowering, its refusal by Dushmant, and its final fulfilment in the reunion of the two. As the work is in verse the poet has added many details keeping an eye on poetic grace and lyrical structure. Its popularity in Gangadhar's poetry is next only to *Tapaswini*. *Padmini* is the poet's only historical work and it deals with the ordeals of Padmini, the queen of Chittor. It is in five cantos, and incomplete.

Besides, Gangadhar also wrote a number of short poems, some of them very short and on casual topics. Three collections may be noted here. They are, 1. *Kabita Kallola* (Waves of Poetry, 1912), consisting of 5 poems dealing with moonlit night, the springtime and the rains etc., 2. *Arghyathali* (The Plate of Offering, 1919) consisting of 39 poems, some of them very short, on assorted topics, and 3. *Kabitamala* (The Garland of Poetry, 1923) consisting of 29 poems. The literary merit of these poems particularly in comparison to his longer poems is uneven, and among these a few poems may be singled out. These are, first of all, *Bhakti* (Devotion), *Amrutamaya* (Full of Nectar), and *Madhumaya* (Full of Sweetness) which have a sincere note of religious devotion and contemplation, and secondly, poems like *Utkal Bharatink Ukti* (The Speech of Utkal Bharati), *Bharati Bhabana* (The Thoughts of Bharati), and *Utkal Lakhmi* (The Goddess Lakhmi of Utkal) which

are patriotic and nationalistic in tone and structure. Particularly *Bharati Bhabana* which was written in 1923, was a veiled attack on the contemporary British administration of India, and *Utkal Bharatink Ukti*, which was written in the background of a script-reform agitation, is a passionate plea to stick to one's own mother-tongue as one should always stick to one's own mother at whatever cost may be. Gangadhar's talent is homely and intimate, and to one coming from the intense poetic heat of Radhanath it provides a soft relaxation.

Radhanath's poetic powers also created Nandakishor Bal (1885-1928), a poet 27 years junior to him, but who wrote at least three long, narrative poems in the manner of Radhanath. Nandakishor, unlike Gangadhar, was born in an aristocratic landed-family in the Cuttack district and served in the Education Department as the Inspector of Schools. He travelled widely and had very intimate knowledge of Orissa's rural life. In addition to three long poems entitled *Sitabanabas* (Sita's Banishment, 1902), *Krushnakumari* (1901), and *Sarmistha*, all putting emphasis on sorrowful life particularly as related to women, he wrote a large number of lyrics or short poems which have been collected in volumes such as: *Pallichitra* (Pictures of a Village), *Nirjharini* (The Stream, 1900), *Basantakokila* (The Cuckoo of Spring), *Charuchitra* (Sweet Pictures, 1902), *Janmabhumi* (Motherland, 1903, 1908), *Nirmalya* (Offerings), *Prabhatsangita* (Morning Song), *Sandhyasangita* (Evening Song), *Tarangini* (The River, 1916), *Nanabayagita* (Nursery Rhymes) and *Anyanyakabita* (Other Poems). As a large number of these poems deal with rural nature, rural life, and the people who live in rural areas, Nandakishor is popularly known as *Pallikabi* or the Poet of the Rural Life. When all these poems are assessed together six different elements may be noted. They are, first of all, a social awareness which shows particularly the poet's unhappiness at the conservative social customs, manners and supersti-

tions. Secondly, there is political awareness and a general unhappiness at the contemporary condition of Orissa and the Oriyas. Thirdly, there is love for rural nature and rural life which is seen in the continual references to rural things and situations. Fourthly, the poems exhibit lyrical emotions, particularly in references to love and nature, which may be due to the influence of English Romantic poetry. Fifthly, there are patriotic sentiments as seen in many references to places in Orissa and in the character of *Utakalamata* or Mother Orissa. Lastly, the poems have an underlying meditative approach, an awareness of mortality and passing time, and at the same time a feeling for permanence and mystic, contemplative strength. Nandakishor's use of language is both colloquial and idiomatic on the one hand and highly Sanskritized, complicated with borrowed images and rhetorical emotions on the other. Particularly the poems with socio-political awareness and rural context have largely idiomatic and conversational language whereas on the other hand the narrative and story-poems or those having meditative approach or lyrical emotions have educated and sophisticated language. But on the whole Nandakishor's intimate perception of rural life and rural nature to the extent of a nursery rhyme simplicity has shown him as an independent poetic talent in the total, overpowering tradition of Radhanath's poetry.

Three other contemporaries of Radhanath may be noted here. The first was Phakirmohan Senapati (1843-1918), a very powerful novelist and story-teller, who also wrote a number of poems. The second was Gobinda Rath (1848-1918), also a prose-writer, and the third Chintamani Mohanty (1867-1944), also a novelist. Phakirmohan's poetic output was immense but a large part of it was devoted to translations particularly from the Ramayana and the Mahabharat. He wrote one long, narrative poem on the birth of Buddha, entitled *Baudhabatar Kabya* (1909) and a large number of lyrics which have been collected in,

chronologically, 1. *Pushpamallya* (The Garland of Flowers, 1894), *Upahara* (Presentation, 1895), *Absarabasare* (In the Retirement, 1908), *Pujaphula* (Flowers of Worship 1912), *Prarthana* (Prayer, 1912), and *Dhuli* (Dust, 1912). These are mainly poems on nature, domestic love, religious devotion, and suffering, written in a simple, conversational language without much rhetoric and passion, and to that extent different from the general tenor of Radhanath's-poetry. But in the satires that he wrote, first of all in a verse travellogue entitled *Utkal Bhramana* (Travels through Orissa, 1892), and subsequently in assorted poems like *Mu Hatabahuda* (As I Return from the Market) and *Utkal Krushak* (The Farmers of Orissa) etc. He is one with Radhanath in satirical anger and aggressiveness of tone, though to a large extent without his vision and profundity. Gobinda Rath mainly borrowed Phakirmohan's style of writing and wrote on casual topics and excelled in satire. One of his interesting and well known poems was *Lat-darshan* (Seeing the Governor) which was composed in 1888, on the occasion of the visit of Sir Stuart Colvin Belley, the then Lt. Governor of the Bengal Presidency, to Orissa. Apparently written in humility, it projected the woes of the Oriyas and carried a sharp catigation of foreign rule in India. That was Rath's usual style of writing—a humorous cum satirical vein which is seen to a greater advantage in his essays. On the other hand Chintamani Mohanti continued Radhanath's style of writing and largely imitated his Kavyas in his own narrative and descriptive poems. Some of these were *Satadala* (Hundred Petals, 1902), *Ganjam Bhramana* (The Travels through Ganjam, 1906), *Meghasan* (Meghasan, 1908), *Dharakot Darshan* (On Seeing Dharakot, 1909) *Sisupalbadha* (The Killing of Sisupal, 1909), *Salindi* (Salindi, 1912), *Udyanakhanda* (Udyanakhanda, 1912), *Aryabala* (The Arya Woman, 1914), *Kalpalata* (Kalpalata, 1915) and *Subhadra* (Subhadra, 1920) etc. Though based on Radhanath's poetry these poems do not convey the perceptive imagination of Radhanath's,

though Chintamani showed greater imagination in his novels.

III

The growth and spread of Indian nationalism in the later part of the nineteenth century and particularly in the early decades of the twentieth, resulted in creating a very outspoken nationalistic voice in the contemporary Oriya poetry. This was mainly done by a group of poet-reformer-politicians between 1909 and 1925 and their combined creative work almost constituted into a movement popularly known as the Satyabadi Movement. The name originated from a place called Satyabadi, near Puri, where these people, under the leadership of Gopabandhu Das, established a rural, residential school in 1909, which not only attracted independent-minded young men, but quickly became a centre emanating reformistic ideas and aggressive nationalistic sentiments. Subsequently in 1915, a journal entitled *Satyabadi*, was published as the mouth-piece of this group, and at least till 1921, when the group was shattered and the school was closed due to political unrest, these writers succeeded in creating a substantial body of literature (prose, poetry, fiction, story, drama, historical and religious discussions as well as children's literature etc.) as well as a new awareness of the purposes of literature, particularly with relation to society and national life. Their tone was largely moralistic and they were motivated by broad liberal human ideals.

Gopabandhu Das (1877-1928) was the eldest of the group. Apart from being a very important political leader of the time he was a fine poet though most of his poems were written during his spells of imprisonment, more particularly during the years 1923-24. His earliest book was probably *Abakasa Chinta* (Thoughts in Leisure, 1899) which consisted of 39 short lyrics mainly with nationalistic sentiments and religious feelings. There were also poems on important personalities of the past (such as Anangabhimha Deb and

Purusottam Deb etc., the ancient kings of Orissa) as well as poems dealing with descriptive nature and personal sorrow. A well-known poem was *Rela Upare Chilika Darshan* (On Seeing Chilika from the Train) which was an account of the lake Chilika as seen from the moving train mingled with nationalistic feelings and personal emotions of unhappiness at the loss of ancient glory of the land. It ends with a rhetorical exhortation—"The mountains and forests continue/The rocky sea-beaches are as before,/But alas, where is that old national glory of Orissa?" Differently in *Bhargabi Prati* (To Bhargabi), a poem addressed to the river Bhargabi which flows beside his village, and in *Chabisbarsa Prabesh* (On arriving at 26), melancholic awareness of the passage of time, and sense of futility and loneliness, are mingled with accounts of quiet beauty of nature. Gopabandhu's other important books were, *Karakabita* (Poems from the Prison), a collection of 13 poems, *Bandir Atmakatha* (The Autobiography of a Prisoner), a long poem having 6 sections, mainly socio-political, and *Dharmapada* (Dharma-pada), a story-poem about a young boy who helped to complete the Konarka temple and subsequently sacrificed his life in a bid to provide security to his community. Some of the poems in *Karakabita* make direct references to prison life whereas some others deal generally with personal emotions of loss, anxiety and dissatisfaction with the working of destiny. But on the whole the poems have a strong personal structure, a continual throw-back in memory and an intense meditative-melancholic tone. An important poem in this group was *Bandir Swadeshchinta* (The Patriotic Thoughts of a Prisoner) which mingles autobiographical elements with intense home-sick thoughts of a prisoner from inside his prison-cell. The result is a strong awareness of reality seen through a large number of familiar local pictures, which is transformed into a picture of beauty and grace through redeeming touches of perceptive imagination.

Two other important figures of this group were Nilakantha Das (1884-1967) and Godabarish Mishra (1886-1956) of whom the former became the Speaker of Orissa Legislative Assembly after Independence and the latter became Orissa's Minister of Education and Finance during the Second World War. Nilakantha's important book was *Konarke* (At Konarka). It has two parts, one consisting of a bunch of short poems entitled *Ramachandire Rati O Sakala* (The Night and Morning at Ramachandi) and the other a long, narrative poem entitled *Mayadevi* (Maya Devi). Both the parts relate to Konarka and the famous sun-temple. The first part records the poet's experiences and the feelings in a stormy full-moon night and the subsequent morning at Konarka where the poet had led, as a teacher, a group of boys for excursion. The feelings range from a sympathetic sorrow for the boys who had lost the comforts of their homes to glorious, nationalistic thoughts about Orissa's past. It was almost like a minstrel singing—the tone being a mixture of rhetorical exultation with melancholic sorrow, and the vision was of a happy bright land inspite of fierce storms and darkness ("Oh, wait, you winds and rains,/Let the night be flooded with moonlight,/And let the blue waves rise through the stars./The moon will shine in the sky scrubbing the earth's mirror,/The silver rays will flow from the sky to the earth./And the moonlight will play in the fresh acres of sand.") The second part narrates a tragic love-story between Narasingha Dev, the young prince of Orissa who at a later age built Konarka, and Maya Devi, the banished daughter of a chieftain. The book was written in a racy, idiomatic language and remains a landmark in Oriya poetry. In addition Nilakantha wrote a long, narrative poem on Kharavela, the 1st century Oriya emperor, and translated Tennyson's *Princess* and *Enoch Arden* in lucid, graceful Oriya verse.

Godabarish mainly excelled in lyrical poems and

ballads. His poems have usually a home-sick element and they picture people, places as well as natural atmosphere in and around his own home-area, that is, Banpur on Chilika. All such poems of his have been mainly collected in three volumes, entitled *Alekhika* (Pictures,) *Kalika* (The Bud.) and *Kisalaya* (The Leaves.). The poems, which are written in a conversational, easy, spoken language, show a sensitive, lonely self and communicate a longing wistfulness. A very well-known, and very popular poem of the poet is entitled *Kalijai* (Kalijai), a musical ballad with intense human touches about the origin of a goddess, named Kalijai (Jai being the name of the girl who got drowned) inside the lake Chilika. The poem succeeds in transforming the sense of sorrow, arising out of the drowning of a young bride as she was going to her husband's house, into a sense of beauty—beauty of nature and atmosphere. In a different mood the poet speaks of the miseries of Orissa, and how Orissa is scattered in fragments only, as if in the last throes of its life—"The head is cut off from the trunk and the feet lie elsewhere./The hands lie and rot and what the eyes see is dead." The poets of the Satyabadi group had a distinct political orientation, and in the third decade of the century their poetry, inspite of its elements of romantic wistfulness, infused contemporary consciousness into Oriya poetry—a consciousness of nationalistic agitation and unrest, as related to the contemporary awareness of misery and humiliation due to a foreign rule.

IV

From mid-twenties till about mid-fifties, for about 30 years, Oriya poetry mainly grew in two different directions, though these directions were not always exclusive of each other, and in number of cases they could be seen side by side as integrating factors in the total poetic achievement of a single poet. The first was

towards a romantic understanding of life where poets concentrated on such things as nature, love, adoration of beauty and spiritual and mystical feelings. At best it created a body of poetry which brought freshness and vigour in the contemporary atmosphere by emphasizing on the individual's ability to imagine and react emotionally. At worst it degenerated into a romantic mellifluousness, almost a pale imitation of the Georgian poetry of the first decade of the century. The second direction was towards a socio-political awareness, almost a direct product of the nationalistic consciousness of the Satyabadi group. It remained close to reality and real situations of life in general, particularly, to changing patterns of the socio-political life of the thirties and forties. Its structure was satirical and it generally developed a tone of resentment and anger. In the first group poets like Padmacharan Patnaik (1885-1956), Kuntala Kumari Sabat (1900-1938), Kalandi Charan Panigrahi (born 1901), Baikunthanath Patnaik (1904-1978), Mayadhar Mansingh (1905-1973), and Radhamohan Gadanayak (born 1911) are included, whereas in the second group we have poets like Lakhmikanta Mahapatra (1889-1953), Godabarish Mahapatra (1897-1966), Ananta Patnaik (1910-1988) and Sachidananda Routroy (born 1918).

But these groups are not mutually exclusive and the characteristics that define their separate poetic directions often intermingle. Thus two relatively more important poets of the first group, that is, Baikunthanath Patnaik and Mayadhar Mansingh, have also poems that link them with the second group. Similarly an important poet of the second group, that is, Ananta Patnaik, may be mistaken as belonging to the first. Yet it is possible to discuss their separate characteristics more elaborately.

First of all, like the earlier Satyabadi poetry the beginning of a self-based romantic poetry was conceived as a poetic movement towards the end of the twenties. This

was mainly done by Kalandi Charan Panigrahi and Baikunthanath Patnaik along with some of their friends, pre-eminent among whom was Annada Sankar Ray who later migrated to Bengali. They brought out a manifesto and called themselves *Sabuja* (The Green) and the poetic movement as *Sabuja andolana* or Green-Movement. (The name *Sabuja* was probably taken from *Sabujapatra*, a contemporary Bengali monthly edited by Pramath Chaudhury). In conformity with this a poetry-anthology entitled *Sabuja Kabita* (Green Poetry) was published which had poems by 5 poets including poems of Baikunthanath, Kalandicharan and Annada Sankar. Particularly two poems by Annada Sankar entitled *Pralaya Prerana* (Incentive to Deluge) and *Srujana Swapna* (Creative Dream) set a tone of high rhetoric and youthful exuberance which subsequent poets tried to follow.

Secondly, arising out of the proclamations and general awareness of a new poetic movement the more important poets drew the attention of the readers mainly to the qualities of poetic emotion and imagination. Baikunthanath's poems were specially remarkable for their quality of imagination. His poems were mainly collected in 3 volumes, entitled *Arunasri* (The Graces of Dawn), *Kabya Sanchayana* (A Collection of Poetry) and *Uttarayan* (The Movement towards North) and were written in a period of about 30 years, from the middle of the second decade to the middle of the sixth decade. A general perception of nature, love and beauty could be seen in many of his poems. In addition, a mystic contemplation of life is presented by the side of an awareness of hard realities of life. His language is often lyrical and the poems show a perfect sense of rhyme and rhythm. A good example is *Yatra Sangit* (The Songs of Journey) from *Kabyasanchayan* which is lyrical as well as mystical in tone, and narrates the protagonist's desire to move from a rotting, decaying life ('the winter's tree with faded leaves') to blossoming nature

of eternal life and eternal dance. There are also other poems like *Nababarsanubhuti* (Feelings for the New Rain) or *Rupakatha* (A Fairly Tale) which celebrate the warmth and immediacy of young love, or still other poems like *Sahid Bandana* (Worshipping the Martyr), *Rickshaballa* (Rickshwawalla) and *Uma* (Uma) which draw the reader's attention to poverty and misery around us. Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh, the other considerable poet of this group, was in comparison to Baikunthanath more prolific. He wrote six long poems and innumerable short poems which have been collected in 14 volumes. As in Baikunthanath so also in him the general approach to life is one of romantic understanding which is seen in his repeated references to nature and nature's beauty, to love, particularly young, adolescent love, and to a semi-mystical perception of a power that rolls through all nature and controls life. In all these the chief protagonist is the poet himself and the process is through sentimental circuits of his own emotions. Thus love is the dominant note in such poetical volumes like *Dhupa* (Incense), *Hema Puspa* (Golden Flowers), *Hema Sasya* (Golden Crop), and long poems like *Upekhita* (The Ignored Lady), *Nikwana* (The Anklet), *Subha Drusti* (The First Look), and *Sadhaba Jhia* (The Trader's Daughter). Similarly a semi-mystical feeling as the dominant poetic consciousness can be seen in the poems of *Akhyat* (Rice Particles), *Jibanchita* (Life's Pyre), *Krusha* (The Cross) and *Sindhu o Bindu* (The Sea and the Atom). Two particularly popular poems may be mentioned here. One is about a boat-journey in a moonlit night in the river Mahanadi near Cuttack. It combines the poet's sensitive feelings for nature with a patriotic recollection of the country's past and finally ends in a semi-mystical perception reminiscent of Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey'. The second is about Konarka, the famous sun-temple. It is in three phases and combines feelings for beauty and love when the temple rises like 'Lakhmi from the blue waters of the

sea', fully-formed in full beauty, and when the stone-statues awake in the moonlit night into an abundance of song and dance with a pride for the artist's imagination, a sorrow at what it has become now-ruin and waste, the rich beauty ending in a melancholy nothingness. A different aspect of Dr. Mansingh's poetry is seen in the projection of a socio-political consciousness. Such poems have been collected in his *Bapu Tarpan* (Offerings for Bapu), *Mati Bani* (The Songs of Soil), and *Swarajyasram* (Swarajya Ashram). Besides, his long poem *Kamalayana* (The Story of Kamala) which is about the activities and sacrifices of a patriotic social worker is a good example of this type. But Dr. Mansingh, like Baikunthanath, excels in romantic poetry and his poems dealing with love, nature and imagination etc. show him as a superior artist.

Mansingh was not strictly a member of the Sabuja Group though his poetry had many of their features. But his contemporary Kalandi Charan Panigrahi was one of the group. For about three decades beginning from mid-twenties Kalandi Charan wrote almost continuously. He always wrote short lyrics and some of his important volumes were *Chhuritiya Loda* (A Knife is Needed), *Khanika Satya* (Momentary Truth), *Mane Nahin* (I Forget), *Mahadipa* (The Great Lamp) etc. Feelings for love and nature, memories of the past, hopes for a bright future and an anger against the small, mean life around him are his main poetic themes, and invariably his poems have got an imaginative wholeness as well as a compact rhythmic structure. Thus a poem like *Mane Nahin* lists with a melancholic pang how sweet graces of the past are forgotten and sweet faces no longer exist; and a poem like *Pasori Delire Simulipala* (Simulipala, I forget you) narrates how, and with what a strong homesick feeling, the poet goes back to the days he spent at Simulipala, a distant mountain village. On the otherhand there are poems like *Mahadipa*, which proclaim

how the lights of hope will spread in the universe like the Great Lamp of Lord Shiva dispelling darkness; or *Chhuritiye Loda* which shows anger at the unfair designs of life and seeks to redress them through violent action. But on the whole Kalandi Charan remains a romantic poet of soft imagination and lyrical emotions, and along with Baikunthanath and Mansingh, contributes to the totality of Oriya romantic poetry of the third and fourth decades.

Another such poet is Radhamohan Gadanayak who is justly reputed for his lyricism and rhyming structures. His first published work was a poetic-play entitled *Kalidas*, and was published in 1933. Subsequently his poems have been collected in 10 volumes among whom *Kabya Nayika* (The Poetry-Heroine), which was published in the early forties, remains as his best. His poems broadly remind such themes as one finds in Baikunthanath or Mansingh—a young poet's preoccupation with love, nature, and a semi-mystic perception of an unknown force in life, along with a vague desire to escape from the turmoils of life. But elsewhere in his other volumes, he has frequently written ballads, taking incidents and characters from Orissa's as well as India's past. Such volumes were *Utkalika* (About Orissa), *Smaranika* (In Memory), *Pasupakshir Kabya* (The Poetry of Animals and Birds), *Dhusar Bhumika* (A Gray Introduction), etc., and they remind the readers of the ballads of Godabarish Mishra of the Satyabadi group. A poem which typically shows the poet's preoccupations with love, nature, lyricism etc. is *Mausumi* (The Monsoon) which is modelled on Shelley's 'Ode to Westwind' and is largely an exposition of a romantic self. Two other poets may be mentioned in this connection. One was Padmacharan Patnaik who was like a link between the Satyabadi poets and the Sabuja or Romantic poets and whose poetical volumes entitled *Padmapakhuda* (The Petals of Lotus), *Suryamukhi* (The Sun Flower) *Golap Guchha* (The Rose Bunches) and *Asa Manjari* (The Blossoms of Hope) etc. were popular texts in schools for

many years. His most popular poem with a wistful, melancholic tone about Orissa's past was *Dhauḷi Pahada* (The Dhauḷi Rock) which deals with high, patriotic sentiments about Kalinga's battle against Asoka at Dhauḷi, on the bank of river Daya near Bhubaneswar, and its consequences. The second poet was a lady, Kuntalakumari Sabat, who was a doctor by profession and spent most of her time outside Orissa, in Delhi. Her poetry was full of patriotic sentiments, a pride for Oriyas as well as an anger against any feeling of inferiority anywhere. But she was basically a mystic poet and her poems collected in 6 poetical volumes (published between 1922 and 1930) and entitled *Anjali* (The Offering), *Uchhwasa* (The Emotions), *Archana* (Worship), *Sphulinga* (The Spark), *Aawhana* (The Call) and *Prema Chintamani* (Love's Jewel) speak of her love for the unknown Lover and Co-ordinator of life.

V

As is mentioned earlier, along with the movement towards achieving romantic sensibility in poetry there grew up side by side, particularly in the thirties and forties, a desire to exploit socio-political realities poetically. This was first given the form of a movement by some politically left-oriented writers, who called themselves 'progressives', and established an association called *Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad* (The New Age Literary Association) in 1935. A monthly mouth-piece, entitled *Adhunik* (The Modern) was started from 1937, and its editor, Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi, the brother of Kalandi Charan Panigrahi, who was incidentally founder-secretary of the Communist Party of Orissa, recruited an array of powerful writers for this movement. They proclaimed against art for art's sake and declared to make literature an agent of revolution and social change. Ananta Patnaik, a leading poet of the group, wrote the inaugural song of the Association as follows—"Awake, the youth of the new age/Awake, and break your fetters;/Pour

your heart's blood/And spread fire in million lives;/Break all bounds/Dry all tears/Destroy all castes/Unite all countries;/ Blow the conch of all humanity/Let the sorrows go/And arise, arise, awake, awake". Though the movement as such petered out by 1939, with the coming of the Second World War, and words like 'progressive' and 'revolution' came to be used more or less rhetorically, it was like a fermentation to finally achieve a strong socio-political awareness in Oriya poetry.

This awareness proceeded at two levels. First of all it was set by certain social ideals, which were mainly borrowed from the West—the Marxist ideals of contemporary Europe. While working through a mood of anger against the prevalent social disparity it moved towards realising parity. This was mostly seen in two poets—Ananta Patnaik and Sachi Routroy. The second level was independent of any ideals. It was more analytical in the sense that whereas in the first level the emotional structure was largely unspecific, in this case a closer attention is given to contemporary problems which are scrutinized with the tools of satire, and if any conclusion is reached, it is mainly by implication. The two important poets who may be mentioned in this connection were Lakhmikanta Mahapatra and Godabarish Mahapatra.

Ananta Patnaik's poetry provided the take-off ground for the new progressive poetry. Apart from providing the poetic voice to Nabayuga Sahitya Sansad he wrote independently and even though he was influenced by Gandhian nationalism his ideals by and large remained Marxism-orientated. This can be seen in many of his poems. For example, in a poem entitled *E Mai Dibas* (This May-Day) he writes generally- "We carry the bodies of mothers and wives/The wailings of children pierce our ears/The gun of justice smokes in our hands/And we take thundering oaths." Elsewhere in a poem entitled *Are Durbhaga desh* (Oh, My Unfortunate Country) he is more specific—"The

revolution knocks at the door/The poor comes to help the poor/ The proletariats fight/.....And oh, my country/ Search for the source of life/Search for revolution." The poems of Patnaik have been collected in 7 volumes including a group of poems on Gandhiji's death, and a large number of his poems attest to his Marxist ideals. But an interesting aspect of Patnaik's poetry is seen in its mixing up with the contemporary romantic tradition, with the type of poems written by Baikunthanath, Mansingh etc. The difference that exists is not so much in structure as in approach. Whereas the romantic poems are more imagination-orientated, mainly given to a contemplation of love and nature, Patnaik's poetry is mainly related to the realities of life which, on many occasions, provide a sense of agony and suffering one misses in the poems of many of his contemporaries. A good example is *Chaiti Chithi aji* (This Letter in the Spring) which sets down the poet's response to a letter which the poet's lady has written to him. The poem ends as follows—"The children will come in the morning tomorrow./They will be feverish and hungry,/ The spring is over,/ It will come again/ Let this letter of love be destroyed, forever."

The second poet who joined his voice with Ananta Patnaik's was Sachi Routroy. He wrote in a different mode after Independence, particularly from the fifties onwards, which linked him with the new poetry that emerged from mid-fifties. Even a considerable portion of the poetry he wrote in the thirties and forties and which was collected in *Patheya* (For the Road, 1931), *Abhijan* (The Expedition, 1938), *Pallisri* (Rural Graces, 1941), *Baji Rout* (Baji Rout, 1943), *Pandulipi* (The Manuscript, 1948), *Abhigyan* (The Signet, 1948), and *Bhanumatir desa* (The Land of Bhanumati, 1949) was predominantly romantic in to neand structure. Yet his early poetry had a powerful progressive note and in such poems like *Sramika Kabi* (The Labourer-Poet), *Sarbahara* (The Proletariat), *Spem* (Spain), *Biplabar Janmadine* (On

the Birth-day of Revolution), *Nal November* (The Red November), *Pravatpherir gan* (The Song in the Morning) and *Berlin* (Berlin) the Marxist-ideals could be clearly seen. Probably the most well-known of these poems was *Baji Rout*. It was a long poem and was written around 1938 to celebrate the heroism of a young boatman-boy who chose to sacrifice his life in defiance during the ex-States' agitations for freedom. The poem was written in a meditative-rhetorical language and in a symbolical structure to celebrate the undying human soul that triumphs over gloom and destruction to rise into a new life of universal hope and liberty. Thus the poem which begins with a proclamation "No, it's not a funeral pyre/It's an undying flame in darkness/ It's not to burn by itself/But to burn others in a holocaust") ends with an assurance ("He gives confidence in victory/Hope in defeat/He is not yours alone oh, mother/He is the world's desire").

The two important members of the second stream, that is, Lakhmikanta Mahapatra and Godabaris Mahapatra, had a similar approach to the socio-political realities of the time. It was through satire. The source was of course Radhanath's *Darabar* which remains as one of the most powerful social satires in Oriya poetry. But *Darabar* mainly dealt with human failings and was not particularly concerned with specific situations or characters and to that extent, though it grew out of contemporary life, it went beyond it to a contemplation of human nature in general. Both Lakhmikanta and Godabaris confined their attention to immediate surroundings. Thus Lakhmikanta who is otherwise known as a fine lyricist and parodist, wrote on noncooperation, salt march, elections, cabinet formation and individual political leaders etc., apparently with a humorous tone but essentially with irony and satire with a view to improve human conditions as far as possible. His *Jiban Sangita* (Songs of Life) which collects 77 of his lyrics and where each poem is set to music, has a semi-mystical per-

ception of beauty and divinity. Similarly the volume entitled *Lalika* (Parody) is a collection of fine parodies he wrote of popular ancient songs as well as the famous *champu* songs (with Radha-Krishna theme) of Baladeb Rath, an eighteenth century Oriya poet. These poems are excellent pieces by themselves but they do not communicate any socio-political consciousness which was the distinct contribution of Lakhmikanta to the poetry of the twenties and thirties. Such poems are mainly found in the volume entitled *Rasa Sahitya*, and a poem entitled *Mantribarani* (Welcoming Ministers) may be taken as a good example. It relates how when the Swarajya came and there was the need for choosing ministers all types of characters staked their claims in competition. A selection committee was formed consisting of people who were vegetarians, who used to fast frequently and who had a lot of sacrifice to their credit. But as one person after another (who conformed to contemporary political bigwigs) narrated their qualifications, it was increasingly found to be difficult to come to a final decision. Finally, after much head-scratching, the members of the selection committee decided to nominate themselves as ministers and cancel the rest (''This is my firm opinion/Cancel all other names/Let us judges/Share the ministry./We should make this sacrifice/As it's a critical time/And it's a noble work/And we have no interest.'') Lakhmikanta's socio-political awareness forms an important part of his total poetic work. But with Godabaris Mahapatra it was the major poetic-awareness. He was personally involved in freedom-movemens and devoted a number of years to journalism. But his most important work was his long editorship of *Niakhunta* (The Stick of Fire), a socio-political weekly of courageous dissent. This he founded in 1938 (March) and continued to edit it for 27 years, till 1965 (November), when he died. All his poems and prose pieces were published in this, and together they established him as the greatest satirical poet of contemporary Orissa. Most

of these poems have been published in 3 volumes entitled *He mora Kalam* (Oh my Pen, 1951), *Handisalar Biplab* (The Revolution in the Kitchen, 1952) and *Kanta O Phula* (The Thorn and The Flower, 1958). In addition he had 6 more volumes including two volumes containing juvenile pieces written in imitation of Radhanath, and one volume containing some stirring patriotic poems and elegies. Probably the most substantial volume among these was *Banka O Sidha* (The Straight and the Crooked, 1964) which contained 128 poems which were mostly written towards the later part of the poet's life and which also contained a number of poems dealing with contemporary awareness. In Godabaris's poetry this awareness related to all aspects of contemporary life—politics, social changes, female education, urbanization, developmental projects, corruption in high circles, prohibition, unification of Oriya speaking tracts as well as general life of low-paid employees and poor farmers. But these poems do not so much deal with narrating the situations as in interpreting them. Particularly through an apparent structure of humour and delight the poems quickly move towards developing intense irony or biting satire as a result of which the readers get a sudden insight into truth which they tend to forget in the dull routine of life. For example in *Garibar Durgastaba* (The Poorman's Worship of Mother Durga) from *He mor Kalam* or in *Sri Gundicha* (The Car-Festival) from *Banka O Sidha* the divine beings like Sri Durga and Lord Jagannath have been equated with ministers who go to the people once in a blue moon like Durga coming once a year or Jagannath going on his rounds during the Car Festival once a year, and they are as indifferent to the problems of people as the impassive gods and goddesses are ritually taken over by the rich. The difference is, whereas Durga and Jagannath are very much a part of the people's being and sustain them in their time of need and weakness, the politicians whom the people vote to power, ignore them and exploit them at

the first opportunity. Similarly the poem *Pecha* (Owl) from *Kanta O Phula* lifts this exploitation to symbolic level of darkness and satanic monstrosity—"The people worship owls, and they are everywhere,/And in darkness preparations continue everywhere,/The conquest in darkness,/Your tooth and nail,/Your hypnotic gaze/And the monstrous game in darkness as money sucked in from treasury." Mahapatra's poetry had a broad range and this was joined with a breadth of thought and understanding. His language and style of writing were essentially idiomatic and colloquial and his poetry provided a strong and viable shape to the socio-political awareness in Oriya literature.

VI

In fact a reading of Godabaris Mahapatra's poetry takes us imperceptibly to the Post-Independence era, particularly beginning from the fifties onwards. The taste was changing and one could detect a good deal of restlessness in the air, a feeling that the poetry of Radhanath, Nilakantha, Mansingh and Ananta Patnaik etc. was not enough. Music, mellifluousness, soft imagination, feelings for love and nature as well as emotions of patriotism and nationalism etc. as they dominated Oriya poetic scene before Independence were found to be inadequate. So also proclamations for a new world or the desire for reforming the society or mankind failed to move the poetic imagination as it used to do before. Instead attention shifted to man's condition in a hostile, uncomprehending world, to a lonely, alienated self, and to an existence which holds no promise or hope for man. The water particles were floating in the air, and the poet who collected them and gave the first, powerful voice to the new poetry movement in Oriya, in the fifties, was Guruprasad Mohanty (born 1924). But before him the link or the pioneer poet in the new mode was Sachi Routroy who had begun earlier in the thirties as a romantic, 'progressive' poet.

Mr. Routroy's *Pandulipi* which was published in 1947 and which contained a large number of his 'progressive' poems all written in the romantic mode also contained some otherwise significant poems such as *Jyamiti* (Geometry), *Pratima Nayak* (Pratima Nayak) and *Mrutabandar* (The Dead Port) etc. The significance of these poems lie in their approach or more particularly in their analysis of existence. Thus, for example, in *Pratima Nayak* which is about a woman-acquaintance of the poet, the poem's quick movement into a helpless pity is ironically resolved in a corroding time. Similarly in *Jyamiti* love, nature and love's desires and nature's fruitfulness are related to each other in a metaphysical compactness to move towards a final suggestion of loss and emptiness. These were the beginnings of a new mode which subsequently grew up in Mr. Routroy's poetry in the fifties and sixties. His subsequent volumes were *Swagat* (Soliloquy, 1958), *Kabita 1962* (Poetry 1962, 1962), *Kabita 1969* (Poetry 1969, 1969), *Kabita 1971* (Poetry 1971, 1972), and *Kabita 1974*, (Poetry 1974, 1975). The five volumes together contain about 270 poems, and though many of these continue the poet's earlier preoccupations with romantic mode and 'progressive' ideas yet there are a number of other poems which show a newness in taste and understanding. Particularly Mr. Routroy's sensitiveness to a spoken, conversational rhythm as well as his capacity to use colloquial idioms are firmly manifested in these poems. Thus *Chithi* (A Letter) from *Swagat* has romantic structure, both in vocabulary and suggestions. The receipt of a letter and a possible reply thereto provoke associations that lead to buzzing bees, white swans, distant river, distant forest as well as to quiet pond and a stream meandering through paddy fields. But in *Smrutilekha* (A Memory) from *Kabita 1962*, the reference to a letter is used symbolically to explore layers of understanding in time and space. As the associations range from Kalidas's *Dasarna* to

Calcutta's Chowranghee and Australia's Melbourne it moves from a desire of intense physical pleasure ("Her touch/The smell of her body,/And the liquifaction of her pleasure") to a startling perception of tranquil happiness where Dasarna and Melbourne become one ("I remember/Far away/In the dense shades of ripe black-berries/My Dasarna/The Village/My Melbourne/My dearest city"). Similarly another poem *Aswina* 1958 is at one level a nature-poem, as there are references to various items of nature at the time of *Aswina* (October) or the autumn season. But at another level it is, like Keats's autumn, rich and fruitful, and sustains life as a mother sustains the life of a child. Finally at a deeper level it is integrated with the poet's consciousness from which emerge bliss and joy. Therefore when the autumn is welcomed at the end it is because, first of all, a fine season has come, secondly, a pleasant friend returns, but finally because it is a startling realization of one's own soul in ecstasy, when small, dark things are forgotten in an area of bright happiness. ("Aswina, please come, please be seated in the arm-chair in the verandah/In the red croton leaves, in the house of creepers, in the river-banks/.....And in the walls, in the sky, in the towns and villages/I see rippling, sparkling innumerable blue childhoods/...Please come along, Aswina/In the house of happy joy./And clouds of white rice, white swans and white jasmines echo you.") This metaphysical habit of mind can also be seen when the references are not to nature or similar things but to such banal objects like a hair-pin or a scooter. Thus the poem *Hair-Pin* from *Kabita* 1971 begins with a search for a lost hair-pin everywhere in the house ("I could not find it ?/Where is your hair-pin ?"). Slowly the search extends to other areas—distant hotels, river-banks, sea-beaches as well as in the 'layers of darkness', in the 'intensity of moon-shine', and finally in the 'climbing steps of time', far and near, in the remote past and distant future. Ultimately the hair-pin becomes the

symbol of youthful life ('Your tresses, beautiful and compact/And the domes of your breast') whose loss leads to a shocking vision of nakedness, emptiness and death. Similarly the other poem *Lal Skutar* (Red Scooter) also from *Kabita 1971*, begins dramatically with reference to the movement of a scooter but in an abstract, unfamiliar situation where the scooter races headlong over emptiness, towards a bottomless abyss, where all things end and sink. But the reader is reminded, first of all, that it is a movement in time, and the past is compounded with the present, and the present is a familiar situation, where you move on a scooter for a picnic ('There are food and drinks/And packets of sandwich/And a tourist map/And a list of inns') along the city streets, which provides a fixed course of action. But at a different level the movement is from non-being to being, from that which is less vital to that else which is more vital, and the point of annihilation becomes the final point of realization ('The sound rises from emptiness/And the scooter races from non-being to being/Tangentially/Under the blue cities'). Still differently, probably there is no movement, the scooter never moves ('Probably it has never moved/Across the time's river'). Yet even existence involves action, and action leads to action, cause to effect, to the final point of annihilation, for which the protagonist craves. On the whole, Mr. Routroy who grew from a strong foundation of romanticism and left-oriented 'progressivism' which have always remained as powerful elements in his total poetic output, has in many occasions moved towards a metaphysical compactness in language and imagination, and to that extent has provided a pioneering voice to the rise of new poetry after Independence.

The first powerful impact of new Oriya poetry came in 1955 when a slender volume entitled *Nutan Kabita* (New Poetry) was published. It contained about 20 poems of two poets, Guruprasad Mohanty and Bhanuji Rao, with a brief

Introduction which discussed the nature and significance of new Oriya poetry. The book provoked immediate reaction and excited the young, imaginative poets. Subsequently Rao edited a quarterly journal named *Prajna* in 1960-61 and along with newer poems of Rao and Mohanty it published new poems by a number of youngsters among whom was Sitakanta Mohapatra. These two events formulated the new taste and shaped and provided a much-needed identity to the new poetry movement. It differed from the earlier poetry in having greater integration with the problems of a techno-nuclear society as well as in a greater awareness of the metaphysical complexities of modern living. Though deeply personal in tone and conversationally-ironic in texture, it evolved an anonymity of understanding and grappled with an alienated vision of existence.

The first powerful voice of new poetry was Guruprasad's. He wrote mainly in the fifties. But his collected poems came out in 1970. It was entitled *Samudrasnan* (Sea-bathing) which had most of his important poems numbering about 30, and including his longest poem (375 lines) *Kalapurusa* (The Hunter). Guruprasad was a student and teacher of English literature and influences on his poetry could be traced to English metaphysical poets including Donne, French symbolists including Baudelaire and the British poetry of the thirties and forties, particularly Eliot. He wrote sonnets, short poems and one long poem, that is *Kalapurusa* and wrote very sparingly. But his poems shocked and provoked reading public as few poems had done earlier and along with detractors he won a large number of admirers, particularly among the young writers, who looked to him as a model. Guruprasad's control over idiomatic-conversational language as well as his capacity to manipulate its suppleness and flexibility was remarkable. Even before the meaning of his poem is understood its poetic force overpowers the reader immediately. Added to this were his ironical tone, sceptical attitude and expanse

and subtlety of meaning. Structurally his poems were intimate soliloquies of his protagonist who was mainly a soul in agony—unfixed, unstable and alienated from an uncomprehending world, a victim of time's passage and the futility of existence. *Kalapurusa* is a good illustration of his powers. It is divided into 5 sections, but these are not like 5 steps, one over the other, where one may move from one theme to the other. These are like corridors which branch out from one central point, but instead of moving away they move into each other, to finally return to the same central point from which they had started. This central point or the central theme is a perception of death or more precisely death-in-life—the modern hell where values do not exist, where the individual identity is lost and where the protagonist goes through a dry, sterile suffering with no hope of purgation. The corridors represent quest—a desire to achieve and realize. But it is all along through desert and darkness and ends in illusion and tiredness. Thus *Kalapurusa*, though a long poem, is not a narrative poem in the traditional sense, the type of poems which Radhanath, Nilakantha or Mansingh wrote earlier. Instead of elaborating a subject or a story or even a theme it gives us areas of perception and while cutting through the logicalities of a narrative structure it explores the multiple moods of the protagonist who lives through the modern futility. In one sense the protagonist is the poet himself, but in another sense he is an anonymity, he is both man and woman, he loves and he himself is a victim of love's waste, he wants to escape from sin but himself a sinner, he is alive but even in a physical sense he is dead. *Kalapurusa* is a complex poem and a compact one and at the same time its word-music is immense. In this a good comparison is probably with T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land'. But living aside the broad similarities *Kalapurusa* is a genuinely original poem, deeply rooted in the post-Independence Oriya urban culture and is a remarkable evidence of the supple powers of Oriya idiomatic language. The

following example is taken from the fifth section where the protagonist is anxious to move ahead—“Silent sands/Sands and sands/Gray grass and sands/Gray earth without end/Pale sun and gray sky / No roads / Gray sands and gray grass/Thirst and thirst without end/Pale, gray, silent/Sands and sands and sky / If consciousness returns / All on a sudden pale consciousness / The thirst of crickets / The consciousness of wind / At the root of wood-termites / Or in dead trees / If consciousness returns / In bones, flesh, skin / The consciousness of thorny grass / If consciousness returns / Sand and sand and grass / The beds of grass / Small ripples / Streams of small fishes / The stream / Grass and clouds / Clouds and peacocks / Not the hunger of crickets / Not the thirst of helpless sands./”.

Bhanuji Rao (born 1926), Guruprasad's companion-poet in *Nutan Kabita*, was like him a student of English literature, and his poems were also collected at a later date, in 1973, in a volume entitled *Bisad eka rutu* (Despair, A Season). The volume contained 85 poems, almost all the poems that Rao wrote in the fifties and sixties. In contrast to Guruprasad's sweeping emotional force Bhanuji's poems were restrained in tone and were done with a careful attention to form, almost like chiselled pieces. Otherwise there were many similarities between the two, particularly in their attitudes to life and in their understanding of the sensitive individual's alienated identity in the modern world. Bhanuji did not write long poems. But his short poems provided multiple variations of the central theme of instability and loss of fixity and as if to compensate Guruprasad's strong poetic force Bhanuji developed a strong sensitiveness, for the beauties of nature. But this was only in appearance because essentially references to nature also contributed to his inner perception of overpowering disunity and disintegration. Even his continuing references to love, or his attempts to evolve a meaning through multiple images which were seen in almost every poem,

were expressive of a poetic desire to come across some sustaining strength. A poem on moon, entitled *Jahna* (The Moon), proceeds as follows—"There is no cloud in the sky,/As if the sky is a sea of light,/And innumerable diamonds of stars are scattered everywhere / And like a diver the moon gathers them again and again. / Or / The moon is like a silvery-boat / That turns its helm to cross the sea of sky. / Or / When the night stands leaning against the horizon, / And mist and rain pour from the sky, / And the wind shakes the forest of clouds,/ Then the moon is like a rider of a racing white horse / That has lost its way in the forest of clouds / Or / After that,/ When the dark killer clouds/Surround the moon/And flash the knives of lightning/Then/ I have seen the moon,/Pale in fright/With a strange gray face". As can be seen the initial cloudless sky is replaced by monstrous clouds that press from each side and the 'sea of light' ends in a strange, fearsome darkness. Elsewhere in *Andhakara* (Darkness) the poet exclusively contemplates on darkness and feels lost in the immensity of darkness surrounding him ("Darkness, darkness/Darkness everywhere/Innumerable darkness press from all sides..."). In a different vein his poem on Konarka, entitled *Konarka* has ironical over-tones and shows a trip to Konarka in all its detail by a group of persons who ultimately never care to 'see' it; or even when he speaks of love, a similar sense of futility and suffering in a dry, sterile, fire can be seen—"I am probably that burnt-day's sun/A flame in the fire of futility/And waiting to wash my stains/In the cool pond of your body". Bhanuji's tone hardly rises to a pitch. It works steadily but with a remarkable intensity of feeling and along with Guruprasad he was responsible for creating a positive taste for new poetry among comparatively younger poets. These were many. But best of them were two poets, Ramakanta Rath (born 1934) and Sitakanta Mohapatra (born 1937).

Ramakanta Rath had been writing since mid-fifties and his first poetical volume was published in 1962. It was entitled *Ketadinara* (Far-off Days) and contained 38 poems in two sections. Subsequently in 1967, 1971 and 1977 three other volumes were published which were entitled as *Aneka Kothari* (Many Rooms), *Sandigdha Mrugaya* (The Doubtful Hunt) and *Saptama Rutu* (The Seventh Season) respectively. These three volumes together contained 89 poems including two long poems, *Baghasikar* (The Tiger Hunt) in 289 lines and *Anantasayan* (The Eternal Sleep) in 191 lines, both published in *Aneka Kothari*.

Ramakanta's first volume *Ketadinara*, where the poems written prior to 1962 were collected, was mainly full of echoes, imitations as well as soft, romantic emotions and rhetorical statements in a reflective-meditative mood. Structurally a number of poems, particularly in the first section, were weak and disjointed and showed a hesitating nervous grip over emotion. Yet the book as a whole showed a lot of promise. First it was language—a spoken, conversational language in a poetic structure which responded sensitively to intensity of feelings whenever such occasions came. Secondly the poetic-motivation could be seen being worked out complexly in multiple levels incorporating irony and ambiguity. And finally, at least in some poems, the poetic-analysis of experience was such that it was gratifying both to the intellect and emotion. Some such poems were *Lanthan* (The Lantern), *Matar bhitaru rastar saundarya* (The View of the Road from inside the Car), *Gotieghara Samparkare* (About a House), *Boitabandana* (Welcoming the Ship), *Duiti Gita* (Two Songs), and *Anyadina* (The Other Day). *Lanthan* for example, is a good example how an intensity of emotion can finally rise to an impersonality of experience. It begins timidly with a reference to an ordinary lantern ('Kerosene, some smoke, a flame, and some insects/All unified in a metal container'), growing rapidly to a picture of a sea of fire burning in the 'movement of waves in a fear-

some dark night', finally to be ironically equated with the protagonist's own being where the fire burns completely tamed and disciplined—"Could you see my existence aflame ? /Could you imagine how I burn and burn earnestly/ In a medium dhoti and half shirt trimly ironed." Thus the conclusion of the poem is ironical which by way of contrast brings out man's futile and helpless existence. Almost a similar understanding is seen in *Boitabandana* in a slightly different context. The title is reminiscent of an ancient practice when ships and Oriya traders returning from commercial transactions abroad used to be welcomed home through a ritual ceremony. The theme in the poem develops through a contrast, between the deadening artificiality of songs and dances in an evening in a modern restaurant with the simple, natural, rejuvenating atmosphere of the sea ("Come to the sea, have patience./It will not harm you/ It will give you plenty of pleasure."). The sea accepts the protagonist with a bid to help her, and finally when she is drowned, it is only to come back in a new form in a new life to be welcomed with eagerness as ships returning from abroad are welcomed—"After your strange bath when the returning winds/Float back your boat to the shore/Where to welcome you/The whole world would be waiting eagerly/In the memory of tears and festering wounds." It is like the 'sea-change' in the 'The Tempest', and the poem is an imaginative apprehension of man's loneliness, in symbolic terms.

These aspects are more clearly seen in Ramakanta's next volume *AnekaKothari* where in 18 poems the dominant poetic perceptions relate to loneliness, dryness, sterility and death. The first poem, *Anyalokarpani* (The Other Man's Water) for example, gives a picture of dry sterility and an intensity of agony and suffering where the protagonist burns futilely in dry fire, and feels that he will burn forever. Elsewhere, the feelings of death almost in every aspect of existence, come again and again, and related to these are

the individual's despair and loss of hope as he moves relentlessly through the cycle of life and death. *Baghasikar* (The Tiger Hunt) is the longest and one of the most complex poems of the whole group. The theme relates to the protagonist's life through suffering and his futile desire to renew himself in a situation of new power and new strength. The context is provided by three complementary situations. The first is about forests, mountains and the movement along the unknown and unfamiliar forest-roads. The second relates to human situations in myth and folklore. The third is about the society—life in clubs, picnics and club-dances. Though the context has an apparent objectivity it finally merges in the deeper awareness of the protagonist which can be seen in two levels. First of all it is a desire, desire to achieve fulfilment, which at one point relates to sex and sexual competence. In the second level it is the non-fulfilment of desires, a sense of inability, incompetence (sexual and otherwise) as well as sense of darkness and futility. Thus tiger becomes a symbol of physically aggressive force as well as the new life-force of regeneration and redemption. It destroys as time destroys. At the sametime through destruction it helps at recreation, as the creative word while counteracting time's waste helps at recreation. Hence the inability of the protagonist to hunt the tiger or reversely the tiger's inability to hunt its prey, is in the ultimate analysis, a failure to get at the creative word which alone is life-giving. The result is no possibility of resurrection or regeneration and the overpowering awareness is one of loss, ruin, futility and death. The poem begins with a reference to words—"First encounter with words/ The words were bubbling in the warmth of fear/They created themselves, they destroyed themselves/They floated in a murmuring sweet river/Like a light ship against the stream/And then like a tiger they devoured us.../And we became a part of them/As the light becomes a part of darkness when the sun sets". Subsequently the poem proceeds through different

areas of perception till towards the end we become aware of the life's cycle and the paradoxical attempts to destroy and to create— "I am afraid / How quickly they break/And how more quickly they ask for our signets as new things/And again they break and again they make their claims". And at the end—"Alas ! with my mad small eyes/ I will not see it,/Even though I have waited for life",

Subsequently, in the poems of *Sandigdha Mrugaya* and *Saptama Rutu* the main poetic preoccupations of Ramakanta continue. Together the volumes contain 70 poems, and in general they register a more developed and superior poetic merit than what we have seen in the earlier poetic volumes. Thus language has become more idiomatic, and along with a greater degree of compactness it has become more racy and supple. At the same time the elements of rhetoric which dominated the first volume and could also be seen in many poems of the second volume are largely eliminated in these poems. The result is an easier and freer poetic movement in comparison to the earlier poems. For example, the first poem in *Sandigdha Mrugaya*, entitled *Paban* (The Wind), is initially about a stormy wind that blew the night before. It disturbed the peace of nature and brought an atmosphere of awe through destruction and anxiety—"The wind blew yesterday monstrously/And throughout the night I could not have a wink of sleep/And again and again/The window panes banged in the wind..." But slowly the wind assumes other meanings, as symbolically it becomes the life-force and blows a man to life ("Slowly I grew up, my hands and legs lengthened/My neck became thick-set, and the width of my chest widened"). But the wind once again goes back to its initial nature—it disturbs and destroys ("And my doors and window panes banged in the air/And my long hands and legs, thick neck and wide chest/Suddenly, in a moment, ceased to exist"). The end is the universal end—that which grew

up into life ended in death ('In the flaming fire/Half of my face is burnt./And the other half merges into darkness...'). The poem deals with ageing and death in the context of time and the references to wind provide both physical and symbolical structure. Another interesting poem is *Hrudayeswari* (Dearest) which apparently depends on a set of contrasts, that is, waking life against life of dreams; past friendship and hope against present emptiness; those who are dead and forgotten against those else who are alive; faith, commitment, purity against betrayal and impurity etc. But at a second level these are all mixed up. Thus nightmares pervade both waking hours and dreams; senses of instability and darkness haunt both the past and the present, and those who are alive are more akin to dead than to living. The perception goes even deeper, at which level the poem narrates a process of ageing which at the same time involves a deep yearning for death. As a result the prayer to divinity which comes at the end of the poem in imitation of the ritualistic prayer to Mother-Goddess ('Your body shines brighter than thousand suns/your long hairs fall freely on your knees'...etc.)—has ironical overtones and has a strain of irreverence about it. Hence to the question, 'Who is addressed as 'dearest' in the poem?' the answer is anybody, and the conclusion is whoever is 'dearest' is also a part of the life's circle through which the protagonist revolves. Yet another good example from the same volume is *Atithisatkar* (Welcoming a Guest) which has the same perception of death in life. The situation is deeply emotional. But it is conveyed through objective pictures and in a structure of remarkably reticent language which by itself is a sign of strength. Thus the guest is death, and it came quietly in a rainy crowded afternoon,

He came here yesterday,
Exactly, timely, four hours ago
It was raining.....
...and past the timing for trains and buses,

I don't know how he came...

And the roads were crowded immensely.

He stayed—how long ?—"He was here for a long time/But when I think of it now/He was here for a twinkling of an eye/And then he returned through darkness". The poet sent his son with him,

And then I sent my son with him,

To show him the way wherever he wants to go.

The son has gone out for a long time

He has not come back.

In the poems of *Sandigdha Mrugaya* Ramakanta achieved thematic compactness along with an easy and free poetic-movement. This synthesis is continued in the poems of *Saptama Rutu*. In addition, the earlier intense preoccupation with death has been relaxed and the poetic-perception ranges more freely over contradictory dialectic of existence. The first poem, *Dwitiya Bichar* (Second Consideration) for example, expresses this duality clearly. On the one hand the protagonist is immersed in his usual, existing life which he calls an 'artificial existence', a 'forty or fifty years' banishment', and which is an accumulation of 'twisted, ancient desires'. But in this context he hears a 'voice' ('I hear whose voice ?/As I stand in the shadows of my strange dreams/Is that your voice ?') and is aware that in the colourless 'forenoons, noons, evenings and nights' it was like a 'blue-coloured' desire where all 'tears and laughter' wreck. This 'voice' sticks to him even though he does not understand it and that is what he deposes at the final 'airless, marble-white court'—"How would I define myself/ Except to say this much that I confuse at times/Your shape and your voice ?". This dual awareness is seen more clearly in a subsequent poem, *Amar Bimarsha Bhagya* (Our Melancholy-Fate). The fate is melancholic because it makes the protagonist one with all the 'cold' and 'death' around him—a part of the totality of 'flowers, clouds and horizons',

of 'villages, cities and markets', of 'mountains and sky', of 'trees and wind'. They constitute the world's 'noise' and 'crowd', where the protagonist is responsible 'to earn money', to 'build houses' and to 'produce children', and in a 'brief dark tunnel' to get the usual fruits, that is, 'rheumatic joints', 'hairs as white as jute', and 'unhappy wife' and 'wayward children'. But at a different level he dreams of a mendicant ('a Sanyasi in tattered clothes'), and is aware of a new life and new happiness.

When at nights I wake up
and fail to sleep again,
Then the sky appears vast,
Then the trees whisper about sunset,
Then the strange songs float freely from the stars,
And the flowers wet with dew lisp like children.

That is why the final poetic-movement is towards a duality—death at the first instance, like a river losing its identity in the sea, also fulfilment from a different point of view, like a river enriching itself in the sea ('Its cruel embrace/Some say it is death/Others say it is reunion.')

Yet the protagonist's awareness of futility and darkness continue intensely in many poems. An interesting poem in this connection is *Saguna* (Vulture) which can be compared in a way to Yeats's 'Sailing to Byzantium'; as in both the poems at one level, the poets speak of a country with those 'dying generations'. But whereas in Yeats's poem the protagonist could set sail from 'that country' to 'Byzantium', in *Saguna* the escape is not easy because the protagonist cannot avoid the temptations, and sticks to them though he knows that they only lead him to death—"Suddenly the crowd of foxes and dogs/And loneliness in fields, schools and shops/And the strange moaning voices from horizon to horizon." Ramakanta provided a deep troubled voice to modern Oriya poetry, troubled because of its intense awareness of futility. At the same time it was an

indrawn voice, contemplative and analytical in its nature, and to that extent achieved a remarkable objectivity. In Sitakanta Mahapatra's poetry on the other hand, though a similar intense preoccupation with death, agony and futility continue, yet the poetic-understanding could move to newer dimensions to finally triumph over death.

Sitakanta Mahapatra's first poetry book containing 47 poems and entitled *Dipti O Dwiti* (The Shine and the Glow) was published in 1963. Subsequently his other books were, *Astapadi* (Eight Steps, 1967), *Sabdar Akash* (The Sky of the Words, 1971), *Samudra* (The Sea, 1977) and *Chitranadi* (The Pictorial River 1979) and they had 8, 85, 44 and 29 poems respectively. Thus Sitakanta's poetical beginnings were in early sixties, slightly later than Ramakanta's, and in following two decades, that is, during the sixties and seventies, he became as active as Ramakanta poetically, and his poetic-powers steadily grew in maturity to place him among those who are in the forefront of modern Oriya poetry.

The poems of *Dipti O Dwiti* have two distinct shapes. About 20 poems collected towards the end of the volume were probably the poet's earliest pieces. They have an easy simple structure more or less in the form of statements, without much complexity in thematic exposition. But other poems, coming in the early part of the volume, have a degree of sophistication and richness one does not usually come across in a first volume. For example *Jara Sabarar Sangita* (The Song of Jara, the Hunter) which is based on mythological situation taken from the Mahabharat and in the form of Jara's soliloquy after he kills Krishna, is in fact a modern man's predicament in a situation which he cannot comprehend. At one level Jara is shocked at the sacrilege he has committed from which grows his guilt and restlessness, and finally compassion for the person he has killed ('Let me cry always,

moaningly/And let me press your delicate feet against my rough breast"). At a different level he suspects the presence of divinity and wonders how could he be able to bring an end to that, and feels that his action is correct by itself as it frees divinity from its own pretenses. But the contact with divinity brings divine knowledge and at the deepest level Jara moves towards that freedom which is the result of such knowledge. Thus scepticism and faith are together present in the protagonist's comprehension and the poem's final structure is dependent on their mutual tension. This tension is also seen in *Basar Darpanare Suryasta* (Sunset in the Mirror of a Bus), another powerful poem. Here, too, there is a reference to a mythical situation—the display of Universal Vision to Arjuna. But it does not provide the context as in the previous poem. On the other hand it becomes the symbolic part of the structure where the context is provided by a moving bus where its mirror reflects the movement. Initially it is the picture of usual life—"Cattle, cattle-herd,/Labourers carrying faggots/Cyclists and pedestrians/All mile-posts/Trees, creepers, flowers". But as these get mixed up with the red-reflection inside the mirror due to sunset, the final perception is one of burning, flaming existence which sucks in all things ("Finished, all finished/Innumerable universes vanish")—the awesome Universal Vision which Arjuna saw. Thus the poem has both casual and familiar aspects as well as unfamiliar and unknown, and the structure moves through awe and fear to attempts at understanding the source of life ('The beaming restless waves of life'). In yet another poem, *Saharare Grishma* (Summer in the City) mythology is used as the metaphorical point of release and hope in an otherwise diseased and destructive atmosphere where the sun, which is the traditional source of life ("We the sons of Samba sing your praise/O, Source of Light") is mercilessly 'gnawing with its sharp teeth at the bones of the city'. As a whole in the more relevant poems of

Dipti O Dwiti three aspects may be noted. First, a picture of familiar realistic life which fill in the details of the structure. Secondly, references to mythological situations or consciousness which provide a broad perspective in the poems. And finally, as the creative-imagination co-ordinates these two aspects it evolves a desire to get strength or to come to an understanding of the vital sources of life.

These aspects have become clearer and more insistent in the poems of *Astapadi*. These are eight long poems and they are organised in the manner of an extended metaphor. Their contexts have been borrowed from mythological situations but their perceptions extend to the present time, and the different dramatic characters in the poems finally merge in the protagonist and in his unified perception. This perception at one level relates to suffering and agony of death—the agony which the cursed human soul suffers in the fire of hell, in the livid darkness of his own sin, where the fire burns but does not kill and the protagonist is reduced to a condition of living-death. Initially it is the all-devouring Hell-fire which rises in a conflagration to the sky —“Suddenly the blue sky and clouds were aflame.../ Suddenly the sky was ablaze with a whirlwind of fire.” Then this becomes the fire that ranges through time and space as well as through physical, mental and spiritual patterns of living (All get burnt/Mind and senses/Perceptions and thoughts/All possibilities/All dreams and hopes”), till it becomes one eternal whirlwind of movement where the protagonist is perpetually caught in his own loneliness and despair—“Around me/Monstrous, ugly, shapeless/...The sea of nameless things and whirlwind/The end/The life ends...” But at a different level it is a contemplation of life’s beauty and fullness where the perception extends beyond death and suffering. This is first of all, seen in the suggestion of Krishna’s birth (like the birth of Christ) anticipating a new life. More clearly it is also seen in Kubuja’s transformation

where ugliness is changed to beauty ("Pressing my feet and raising my chin you straightened me/Hopes sprouted/Dreams, flesh and life bloomed"). But it is most insistent in the last poem *Solon* where the protagonist is seen in the intimate connection with the sea. This on the one hand frees the protagonist from the fires of hell and on the other extends his soul from ugliness and suffering to beauty, fullness and bliss.

The use of myth as an integral part of the total poetic-structure is seen to its best advantage in *Astapadi*. But in subsequent poems too, Sitakanta continues to integrate myth or the universality of meaning which a myth provides with the individual poetic visions. At the same time his poetry develops towards a deeper understanding of life's complexity, richness and profundity.

The first poem of *Sabdar Akash* indicates this new complexity. Though entitled *Erodram* (Aerodrome) it does not provide any scene of routine airport activities. On the other hand it projects two different areas of experience—one relating to village and representative village-scenes, and the other to the sky and the sky's vastness, one near and familiar and the other distant and unfamiliar. But both the experiences merge in one movement, like a plane moving in or moving out of the aerodrome and finally the movement transcends its physical dimensions to assume the symbolic role of a quest—"Unending wearisome quest/Neither here, nor there/Neither in deep sleep/Nor in monstrous consciousness, searching life and death/Dreams and awakening". Thus the aerodrome becomes the symbol of a movement which is physical as well as more than physical. In fact this consciousness of a movement from one condition of mind to another and linking them together to metamorphose in a deeper understanding of life provides a strong structural component in the poems of Sitakanta. Thus in the title poem of *Sabdar Akash* the crude noises of life are heard along with a fine, subtle tune generated by

the movement of creative words (''Day and night I hear the song of blue sky/...The sky in words,/The sky of blue words/The words blue, grey, pink, red/...Beaming, glittering'') and the final perception is one of illumination—'wordless', 'echoless', 'shapeless' and 'colourless'. Similarly in *Anyā Samaya* (The Other Time) of the same volume, the dry, sterile land where 'shadows dance in fields' and where under a 'beating sun' the 'wind blows breathless' suggests one condition of life from where lonely helpless people like 'lost souls' are forced out in search of 'drops of rain' and life. But the movement towards rescue does not just lie in 'rains'. It lies in 'contact', in understanding the graces of life, in communicating love and compassion. One has to go beyond the touch-me-not purity of the rituals, towards an understanding of the natural language of living (''The language of crows/The language of grass''). Only then the physical as well as spiritual sterility would be broken, a different and higher condition of life would be possible, and the lost souls would be redeemed and salvaged. The final understanding is symbolically presented through an address to the great sage Rusyasrunga whose presence is supposed to bring rains as it did in the Ramayana to the dry, rainless country of Angadesa.

Please touch us with hands of rain,
 Oh Rusyasrunga !
 Your hands of love and compassion;
 Come,
 The boat is ready,
 The parched, dry land waits for you,
 And all the women—
 thirsty, hot blooded, wait;
 Come !

The sea provides the main motive-force in the poems of *Samudra*, the next volume, where the poems are together organized again in the form of an extended metaphor.

Thus there are three movements, from introduction, to neighbourliness, and finally to union, and the poetic-perception is unfolded in complementing as well as superseding conditions of mind. Hence from one point of view the poems deal with isolation, suffering, agony where the traditional sources of life fail and where the sea symbolizes destruction—the instrument of final deluge. But differently the sea is also the primary source of life, the repository of all knowledge, and generates cycles of fertility and fruitfulness. *Suryapuja* (The Sun-Worship) illustrates the former condition. It speaks of the relationship between the man and the sun, the former as the slave and the latter as the emperor. But the emperor cannot protect his slave—the sun as the traditional source of life fails, hope becomes illusory and light, fire etc. do not sustain, and what the protagonist finally sees is a 'gray-sea of loneliness stretching from horizon to horizon'. In *Mahanagarir Sandhya* (The Evening in the City), another illustrative poem, this same vision of agony and fear, first of all, comes dramatically—"In the crowded market/In the evening/He suddenly jumps on me/And compels me to open fifty-two chambers of fear", and subsequently in philosophical calm—"In my shadowless palm/A lazy jealousy of the sea dances/A strange, silent peace descends/And all my restless senses drown". But the protagonist is also aware of the other condition of mind. For example in the poem *Samudra* (The Sea) the protagonist knows that he is not alone in his journey. There is the sea like an affectionate goddess, always at his back, and he can always hear the 'jingling' of her 'anklets' and the noise of 'soft feet', like the steps of goddess 'Lakhmi'—"I know you walk at my back/Your steps like the steps of Lakhmi,/And my hopes and dreams and fear/All reflect in your two dark eyes". Similarly in the next poem *Parichaya* (Introduction) the protagonist speaks of a contact—the contact with the sea ("Alone I fight with your blue confusion") and is aware of nature's beauty and

grace ("Little nests of crabs, hazy mists, forests of murmuring pines,/And murmuring, singing sands, and returning foams,/And a holy language everywhere"). The contact finally turns into an intimacy and the protagonist is startled to find that his whole being is filled with a strange fragrance of the sea. Elsewhere the poet speaks of the call of the sea as the call of life—like the call for a resurrection when the dead men arise—"They will get up when you blow your conch/In the evenings,/In the temples,/As the waves break,/As the moon shines/At the time of harvesting/At the time when the sea calls/And the clouds break into flowers in the sky". Thus *Samudra* shows a close concentration of experience and emotion and its poetic intensity is sharper in comparison to Sitakanta's earlier volumes. The next volume *Chitranadi* continues this intensity and sharpness though the archetypal universality of sea is now replaced by a contemplation of life in general.

Thus in the poem *Jhada* (Storm), in a frame of poetic references to Krishna-myth as well as to Oriya folk-tales, two poetic-directions can be noted. One relates to death and destruction, to a force like a monstrous whirlwind that rages and ravages—"uprooting", "searing", "pounding", "exploding innumerable volcanos, pouring streams of hot tear". On the other hand the other direction moves to an awareness of life—continuity of life and blossoming of a new life even after destruction ("The mornings will be full of birds' songs...and tiny flowers will peep from among the branches"). The physical devastation coming at the wake of the storm is transferred to a mental emptiness and reversely the hope of a new life is communicated as a sense of richness and fertility ("rainbows, clouds and sun" and "birds flying in formation at the distant blue"). Similarly in *Atmarakhya* (Self-Defence), a poem with a structure of irony and archetype, that which is artificial and death-like is defended against that else which promises an inflow of life and rejuvenation. Apparently it is spring which is

refused entry into the city as people lie huddled up in the darkness of their concrete confinements. But at a deeper level the references are, first of all, to an impure, artificial existence which is our existence ("The conventionalities and discipline/The routine and calculations/Weighing of emotions and desires/Our accustomed second pictures/And daily games") and secondly to a pure and genuine suggestion of life ("Soft breeze, fragrance of flowers, and the proud march of the spring") which may be made available to us if we wish, and finally to a perception of a 'greater life' which may transcend our existence and all its limitations—"Ascending the stairs of blood and bones/ In the space of consciousness.../Suddenly in the shades of Brundaban/As Yamuna flows upstream/The flutes of Shyam reverberate". Probably the best poem of *Chitranadi* is *Parakiya* (Adultery). This also continues the same complexity of consciousness, from an awareness of the realities of life to an understanding of its deeper essence, and finally to a central perception that transcends all awareness and understanding. Thus in the context of Krishna-myth—Krishna's loves and dances, and his irresistible call to women of Gopa (hence the reference to adultery), the protagonist seeks deliverance from the burning life of sex and family to finally grow into that Nothingness when the human soul mixes with the Universal Soul and all separate identities vanish.—"It appears nothing is there/Nothing, no body / None, nothing / No body, nothing / No sight, / No colour, No happiness, No noise/ Nothing, Nothing/Only a strange symphony of emptiness". The poem conveys the consciousness of grace, beauty, love, hope and redemption on the one hand and the experiences of the present, limited routine life and all its ugliness and agony on the other, and makes us realize the significance of the former in the context of the latter. As is pointed out earlier Sitakanta's poetic-structure has many levels and his poetic-insight often goes into the essence of

contemporary living. He not only provides a powerful voice but also a richly perceptive awareness to the new Oriya poetry that grew up after Independence.

VI

Guruprasad, Bhanuji, Ramakanta and Sitakanta constitute the first major group of new poets and they together provide the most substantial and richest structure to new Oriya poetry. But the flowering of this poetry has been continuing and whereas Guruprasad and Bhanuji first wrote in the fifties, and, Ramakanta and Sitakanta in the sixties, there are other poets with considerable power who have made their mark in the seventies. Pre-eminent among these are Saubhagya Kumar Mishra (born 1940). and Jagannath Prasad Das (born 1936). Saubhagay's first book *Atmanepadi* (Interior Talks) was published in 1965. Subsequently three other volumes entitled *Madhyapadalopi* (Missing the Middle Word), *Naipahanra* (Swimming a River) and *Andha Mahumachhi* (Blind Bees) were published in 1970, 1973 and 1977 respectively. The first volume showed a finely sensitive poet with a confident command over the medium, like an intelligent poet groping his way towards new areas of understanding. But structurally the poems had a general tendency towards romantic conventionalities and they had a number of superficial echoes of Guruprasad. The mode changed in the second volume when the romantic dependence and the echoes were largely overtaken, and an independent and original insight grew. The volume had 52 poems and a number of poems registered a subtle structural intelligence.

But it was in the two subsequent volumes, more particularly in *Andha Mahumachhi* that the voice of an adult and powerful poet is heard, a poet whose understanding of modern life is both analytical and perceptive. For example, at a simpler level, the themes of two poems *Sasidei Kanda* (The Tears of Sasidei) and *Darjiling*

(Darjeeling) are related to love. The first poem deals with adultery, the sudden love-affair of a woman on a particular day, and the second with the desire for a good time at a distant place like Darjeeling. But at a different level we become aware of loss, suffering, agony as the woman fails to reconcile with the situation, and again with a sense of loss and death as the protagonist's search for love ends in complex emotions of violence and death ("All my delayed world is in your navel/Smooth as death/And as deep"). Similarly in *Haraprasad* (Haraprasad), another poem which is also related to love, at one level the protagonist is involved in sexy, lustful desires, but at a different level he gropes through his sense of darkness, uncertainty and emptiness ("Some holes into which he put his hands/And groped in emptiness/In the indifference of naked time"). *Kualalumpur* conveys this sense of loss and uncertainty more forcefully. Thus, first of all it is a particular place to which one can go and come back like going to any city on the globe. But for the protagonist it is not that simple. As he continues to search for the city he slowly comes to improbable, impossible areas till finally Kualalumpur comes to represent life's unknown destination which probably holds out the promise of deliverance from the limited timidity and caution of existence but essentially becomes a symbol of uncertainty and emptiness.—"Our courage is to walk directly from Platform 1 to Platform 2/Our caution is to return directly from Platform 2 to Platform 1/Suddenly, somewhere, a train leaves/Which train ?/Where to ?/Kualalumpur, Kualalumpur". The individual's despair and loneliness as well as the sickening compulsions of living a purposeless, meaningless life through the inevitable details of a routine existence, can also be seen in *Andha Mahumachhi*, the title-poem. At one level the blindness of the bee is symbolic. It relates to the denial of vision to the protagonist who blindly gropes through existence in a state of helpless melancholy only to fall a victim, at the end, of

the blind time, a time which never makes distinctions and moves on in inexorable relentlessness,

And I am to understand that,
We will all have to sleep after sometime,
And the smooth time like a snake
will glide over our feet
And the buds will open into flowers
near our hands.

But the bee's activity is also symbolic. Even though blind, it yet flies in search of honey which is sweet and nourishing. In a way it is a compulsion, a part of the bee's nature, and symbolically the honey is to be found everywhere (not in flowers alone), from A to Z ('in lotus, in defeat, in empty firms, in fruits/In flutes, in quarrels, in mornings, in fear / In clouds, in temples, in vagina, in journey/...with everybody, everywhere.../ Everywhere honey.../ In flowers and festering wounds'). This brings in the deeper level where the protagonist's suffering is not the end. It is only a part of a more complex awareness where at the same time grace, sweetness and light exist. As a result even though the vision is denied at any level it is granted at another, and while submitting to time's power one may ultimately grow independent of it. Saubhagya could quickly grow out of influences and limitations and in today's Oriya poetry he represents a sharp, intense as well as a deeply illuminating aspect.

Though senior to Saubhagya in age Jagannath began his poetic career late. His first volume *Prathama Purusha* (First Person) containing 25 poems, in a unique get-up (which immediately caught the attention of the public) and with a cover-illustration by Satyajit Ray, was published in 1971. Subsequently his two other poetry-collections have been published. They are *Annyasabu Mrutu O Annyanya Kabita* (The Other Deaths and Other Poems, 1976) which contained 26 poems, and *Je Jahar Nirjanata* (Everybody to

his *Loneliness*, 1979) containing 50 poems. Jagannath, like his immediate predecessors, Ramakanta, Sitakanta, even Saubhagya, is intensely aware of loneliness, instability and death on the one hand and a nourishing, meditative insight on the other. Generally his poems have a context in love but his poetic directions usually move towards a compact emotional sophistication. As a result we invariably hear an adult voice and come across an alert, rich poetic sensibility. This could be seen in Jagannath even from his earliest poems. Thus poems like *Priyatama tamaku* (Beloved, to You) or *Jharaka* (The Window) from *Prathama Purusha* are apparently love poems which express the poet's concern for his beloved or for his love-acquaintances. But the poet's concern in the first poem ends in a final awareness of 'failure', 'despair' and 'emptiness' ("Look at my eyes, at the sparkling emptiness") and in the second, in a sense of loss and complete darkness ("In this dark floor all vanished/And windows closed one by one"). Differently, other poems of this volume which do not directly deal with love have also senses of intense loneliness and emptiness in their structure. Thus, *Kabacha* (Talisman), the first poem, speaks of the protagonist's desire to move out of his accustomed circle. But where?—"That is a strange land : empty, absolute emptiness/Like my life's lost afternoons/And innumerable shadows circle in the sky."

The love-motivations are more pronounced in the poems of the second volume. But again, as before, love-emotions form a part of the total poetic complexity where the feelings of love are taken as releasing points towards an awareness of loss, suffering and death-like existence. Thus the first poem *Sandhya thik Chhata* (Sharp at 6 in the Evening) has a number of aspects in its structure. First of all, it is a love poem where the protagonist has an appointment with his lady at 6 in the evening—"You said we would meet at six/At sharp six in the evening/We two/

Outside the town''. But the appointment is not an end. It is the releasing point for other feelings—uncertainty for the protagonist (''from morning to evening, from evening to morning/My sleep has no dream, no memory, no desire, no hopes''), restlessness for the lady (''Would you search for me excitedly/In your bed, saree, tressess/Restlessly/Putting hand on your breast'') and finally a sense of total annihilation for both (''It is the last day of life/This evening/and the world ends in final conflagration''). Thus the initial anxiety for keeping an appointment where two persons meet on a social plane at a lonely place ends with a situation of union when they join privately at a crowded place—''It's immensely crowded outside the town/All the clocks of the noon have stopped/Only you and I, and evening sharp at 6/And the strange people of the city''. Thus at a different level the 'appointment' takes up sinister implications, as if it is an appointment with death. Elsewhere, the poet's awareness of love as well as his awareness of death are intermingled in an emotional compactness as in *Tamaku janiba* (To Know You)—''When I touch you/Suddenly the time closes its eyes/And millions of stars fade from the sky/And long, gray nights of dew and cold scatter everywhere''.

In *Jejaha Nirjanata*, the last volume, a concern with time and its relationship with the life's process is seen more insistently. At one end this is an awareness of agony and suffering, the coils of existence at a point of time. At the other end the coils provide the link with eternity, the point of time expands to a point outside time, and the protagonist acquires a meditative insight into the process of life: The first poem *Kie Janichi Kete Samaya* (Who Knows What Time) deals with the movement of time, from a limited point to limitless eternity and structurally this movement is expressed in the movement of a train (''The train moves on/From station to station/.. From platform to platform/The express speeds on/In the early hours of the morning''). This is a continuous movement forward (''No

time to look back"), and at a different level the movement is from emptiness ("From one horizon to another/From one emptiness to the next"), and from one condition of mind to another ("from consciousness to unconsciousness"). From one point of view this is life's journey and the protagonist cannot escape from this. From another point of view this suggests continuous flow of time which has no beginning and no end and the protagonist moves along with it, with 'fear' and 'without knowledge'. A similar poetic-understanding can also be seen in *Tamasahita Chhatighanta* (Six Hours With You). It has references to train as well as to situations of love in its structure. But it essentially deals with an intensity of experience and contact which the protagonist feels may provide him with exits of escape in the range of passing time. The desire for the experiences of a 'fixed' point is also seen elsewhere, in *Aluar Parityakta Dipare* (In the Neglected Island of Light). It begins with references to innocent, happy pleasure ("Around flower-plants/The continuous merry-go-round of the butterflies,/And in the new affection of green leaves/The postman will give the first news of the spring") and goes on to give the picture of life like a room with closed doors which are to be opened so that, "Ignoring storm and sea/He will extract from the outside sky/Into the midst of dark room/A bright, glittering morning".

The seventies have seen a fine flowering of new poetry. Apart from the more significant poets we have discussed earlier, a large number of other new poets, mostly born in the thirties and forties, have conformed to and expanded the new poetic awareness so ably initiated by Guruprasad in the fifties. Some of these poets and some of their books are, Saurindra Barik (*Samanya Kathan*, First Definition, 1975), Deepak Mishra (*Saptama Pruthibi*, The Seventh World, 1977 and *Arana Mainishi*, The Wild Buffalo, 1979), Sarat Chandra Pradhan (*Nadi O Machha Hansa O Saras*, The River and Fishes, Swans and

Seagulls), Harihar Mishra (*Akhyama Debata*, Incapable God, 1978), Bibek Jena (*Pabanar Ghara*, The House of Wind, 1971), Rajendra Kishor Panda (*Gaun Debata*, The Minor God, and *Anabatara*, No Incarnation), Sm. Prativa Satpathy (*Grasta Samaya*, Affected Time, 1974 and *Sahada Sundari*, 1978), Nityananda Nayak (*Bidirna Marala*, The Torn Swan, 1976), Bansidhar Sarangi (*Samaya Asamaya*, Time and Untime, 1977), Haraprasad Das (*Alokita Banabas*, The Illuminated Banishment, 1978), Surendra Mohanty (*Asabda Sabda*, The Wordless Word, 1978), Praharaj Satyanarayan Nanda (*Sabasangam O Anyanya Kabita*, The Copulation with Corpse and other Poems, 1978), and Nrusingha Rath, Debadas Chhotroy, Pramod Mohanty, Phani Mohanty, Amaresh Patnaik, Brahmotri Mohanty and Trilochana Bhol. An intense consciousness with the realities of life on the one hand and a desire to comprehend this consciousness in a greater, deeper awareness of existence on the other, can always be seen in these poets. In addition Oriya poetry has come a long way from the rhyming, mellifluous structure of the pre-Independence days to something close to spoken, conversational language of everyday speech, and from a uni-dimensional concentration with familiar, domestic desires to a mocking, ironical, multi-dimensional attitude towards life, life's problems and the multiple structures of existence. The new Oriya poetry has grown conforming to the change of taste with the change of time, and has moved from the insularity of a rural and agricultural civilization to the expansive sophistication of an urban civilization related to the techno-nuclear realities of the time. As it tries to purify emotion through an analysis of life's agonies and futility, it distinctly projects an adult voice which is so much needed today for a continuing, healthy life. At the sametime, it may be noted, that the important poetic traditions of the twenties, thirties and forties also continue today. That is, the tradition of romantic poetry as well as the tradition of 'progressive' poetry also contribute

to the total mosaic of post-Independence Oriya poetry. But they are not as important today, neither their impact is felt as much as it used to be felt 40 years ago. The young sensitive mind is responding more easily to the type of awareness represented by the new poetry of Guruprasad, Ramakanta, Sitakanta etc., and as is already pointed out, this is due to a changing pattern of living and the consequent change in taste and attitude. Yet mention may be made of some capable poets in these two traditions. Thus whereas Binod Nayak (born 1919), Janakiballav Mohanty (born 1925), Benudhar Rout (born 1926) and Chintamani Behera (born 1928) wrote in the tradition of romantic poetry, Rabi Singh (born 1932) and Prasanna Kumar Patsani (born 1947) have been writing left-oriented progressive poems. Binod Nayak writes longingly of the country of the Beduins ('grapes', 'poplars', 'apples', 'wine') and even when his attention is drawn to the familiar areas like his own country and the village, the same imaginative longingness can also be seen ('paddy fields', 'small ponds', 'shadowing banyan trees', 'broken temples'). His two important books are *Nilachandrar Upatyaka* (The Valley of Blue Moon, 1951) and *Sarirupa* (The Reptile, 1969). Similarly a typical poem of Janakiballav is *Yatra* (The Journey) from *Bichitrabarna* (Multicoloured) which romantically narrates the migration of Krishna's Yadavas from Mathura to Dwaraka, and Benudhar's *Nutan Barsha O Kapota* from *Pingalar Surya* (The Sun of Pingala), which is a rhetorical invocation of beauty and youth. On the whole these poets have a subdued poetic-voice given to a contemplation of beauty and grace in the manner of Baikunthanath and Mansingh. But the poet with a strident voice is Rabi Singh who is the most important exponent today of Oriya 'progressive' poetry. Some of his important books are, *Charampatra* (Ultimatum, 1961) *Pathaprantar Kabita* (The Poems of the Street, 1959), *Sithila Balga* (Loose Reins, 1962), *Lalpagodar Preta* (The Ghost of Red Pagoda,

1963), *Bhrukuti* (The Frown 1963), *Bidirna* (The Torn, 1964), *Padatika* (The Foot Note), *Apritkar Kabita* (Unpleasant Poems, 1966) and *Jwalara Mala* (The Garland of Agony, 1967). A typical poem of the poet is *Jwalara Mala* where he addresses his lady with good deal of anger—“My love is broken/Everything is unpleasant/Along with me your life is now full of poison/My garden has no flowers/Everything is burnt/There is only nakedness/Bitter life/And absolute emptiness”. Differently in *Agnipakhya* (Fire-wings) the voice is more assertive and ominous—“When I look up lightning strikes/And thunder rolls from horizon to horizon/...As I move, the sea moves/The floods come untimely/And mountains break”. There is rhetoric in Mr. Singh’s poetry, but also power, and his command over medium is very competent.

Modern Oriya poetry which began in the middle of the 19th century with Radhanath Ray and Madhusudan Rao has evolved from power to power and in the process has acquired immense variety and richness. Particularly after Independence it has shown both resilience and strength and has developed an intense insight into the fundamentals of existence. Today it represents best of Oriya creative talent and most perceptive.

NATIONALISM AND POETRY : ORIYA SCENE

The Hindu Orissa lost its Independence in 1568, after which it came to be ruled respectively by the Muslims, the Moghuls and the Marathas, till 1803, when the soldiers of the East India Company marched into Orissa to crush the Marathas, and Orissa came to be ruled by the British. The new rule created more problems than it solved, though it was presumed that people in general would welcome the new regime after long years of deprivation, misery and misrule. In fact the new administration either could not respond, or did not think it worthwhile to appreciate the local modes of living, and a tradition, many ways different from the one it has been accustomed to, in Bengal. Thus the newly occupied territories in Orissa were designated as the district of Cuttack and were kept under the Bengal Presidency, where they came to occupy a minor position in the total administration. All regulations promulgated in Bengal and Bihar were made effective in Cuttack. And while no attention was paid to the spread of education, the mode of judiciary, police organisation as well as revenue administration etc., were directly taken from Bengal and were made operative in Orissa without considering to what extent they improved upon the existing systems. To cap it all, the local people were progressively replaced in all seats of power as well as in the possession of landed property, by the outsider Bengalis. Thus between 1806-1816 as many as 1011 estates, out of a total of 2340, were taken out of possession from Oriya Zamindars by Bengali rich men and officials, most of whom looked after their estates from distant Calcutta. The situation was in no way improved because of the apathy of the British masters. The result was a general social exploitation and economic deterioration. The deep-rooted resentment of people burst

out in the revolt of local militia men, a revolt called 'Paika Rebellion', in 1817 which the Oriyas consider as their first 'War of Nationalism'. It took place at a place called Khurda, near Puri, under the leadership of Baxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar, the military commandar of the Raja of Khurda, and was motivated to establish the rights of local people on their own property against the intermediaries who had converted the land into a 'colony inside a colony'. The rebellion was, of course, suppressed. But it brought a change in the atmosphere, provided a new awakening both among the rulers and the ruled, and in short, fertilized the ground on which the Oriya nationalism was to flourish. The immediate result was a greater interest in the spread of education and a greater concern for providing more and more jobs in the administration to the sons of the soil.

The next event of importance from the point of view of nationalism, was paradoxically, a famine called 'Na Anka', refering to the 9th regnal year of the King of Puri. It raged in such an epidemic proportion that according to an official estimate, it took a toll of about a million lives, which was almost one third of the population of Orissa Division at that time. The local administration came under heavy fire from no less a person than Sir Stafford Northcote, the then Secretary of State for India, who said, "This catastrophe must always remain a monument of our failure, a humiliation to the people of this country and to those of our Indian officials of whom we had been perhaps a little too proud." The famine took place in 1865-66, after about 50 years of 'Paik Rebellion', and though during these 50 years there has been some progress in Orissa, it was actually after the famine that a real attention was given in Orissa, to administration, to education, to social reforms, and to economic upliftment, and in short, to accept the Oriyas as a body of intelligent, competent people with a long heritage and tradition. The time was ripe for a national

awakening. The feelings were coagulated, first of all, by the encouragements and promotions advanced by the administration that tried to do away with the intermediaries and come to people directly; and secondly, by the attack of some Bengalis, including the noted historian Rajendra Lal Mitra, on Oriya language, declaring that Oriya is not a separate language and should not be made the medium of instruction in Orissa. The cudgel was taken up by Oriya intellectuals and educated people, particularly the writers, who wrote books, started periodicals and newspapers, established printing presses and organized literary societies and clubs. The most important among the periodicals was *Utkal Dipika* (1861) which was founded and edited by Gaurisankar Roy, and which almost came to symbolize the new Oriya enlightenment; and the most important association was 'Orissa Association' (1877) which acted as the nucleus of Oriya nationalistic spirit, till it was supplanted by the larger and more forceful, 'The Utkal Union Conference' (*Utkala Sammilani*) in 1903. In fact the Oriya nationalism came to its maturity and adulthood only after the great famine of 1865-66, in the later part of the 19th century, and continued in its full strength till 1936, when a separate province of Orissa was formed. Its motivations were cultural, social and political, in that order, and the most dominating principle was to achieve an identity of respect and dignity for the Oriyas. Its leader and guiding spirit was Madhusudan Das (1848-1934), who was affectionately called by common people as 'Mr. Das', and who has come to be reckoned by subsequent generations as *Kulabrudha* (The Elder). Mr. Das's leadership in social-political field, as regards the spirit of nationalism, was ably supported by poets, pre-eminent among whom was Radhanath Ray (1848-1908), the first, most important modern poet of Orissa.

(2)

Radhanath was in charge of Orissa education at that time, as the Inspector of Schools for Orissa Division. As a

part of his official duty, and often also independent of it, he travelled extensively throughout Orissa—a remarkable feat considering the inadequacy of communication in those days. His wide travels were reflected in his poetry, most of which were long, narrative poems dealing with the fictional as well as semi-fictional heroes and heroines from Orissa's past. Radhanath's poetry not only broke with the past, but at the same time, created a completely new taste for the readers, and in this his nationalistic attitudes had a major contribution. The poet's nationalistic spirit had initially two directions. First it revelled itself in a very comprehensive account of Orissa's immense natural beauty—its rivers, mountains, lakes, forests etc. as well as its many places of pilgrimage and glory. Secondly, it goes to the past—to invoke the past days of heroic action and adventure. Subsequently, he contrasts the present misery, distress, and low spirit with the past richness, and points out its incongruity in the midst of nature's plenty. Finally, the spirit rises to a sublime awareness where in veiled language he rails against the foreign occupation of the land which he considers as the root of all present misery. Apart from his narrative poems, Radhanath wrote a long descriptive poem on the lake Chilika, entitled *Chilika*, wherein he describes manifold aspects of the lake with a good deal of love and affection, and always clothed with a fine romantic imagination. He also wrote an epic (which he could not finish) based on the Last Journey of the Pandavas, entitled *Mahajatra*, which in fact was an extolation of Orissa's great beauty and India's past glory. As Radhanath wrote after the 1865-66 famine (most of his poems were published in the last two decades of the 19th century) and at a time when the country was under the strict control of the Britishers, he was intensely aware of the realities around him, and his spirit of nationalism was both a protest against the contemporary dispensation and an expression of a new awakening and a new consciousness.

In *Mahajatra* the poet expresses his nationalistic sentiments very succinctly. The Pandavas, in the wake of their last Journey, and after leaving Hastinapur and moving along the course of the Ganga, finally came to the remote shores of Nilachal, that is, Puri, where from inside the 'vast watery wilderness of eternal blue' rose a resplendent Agni, the God of Fire, and accosted them. To the question of the Pandavas about the whereabouts of the place, Agni answers—"It's your greatest good luck that you have come to this holiest of all lands—the only place in the whole of Bharat which the Great God has chosen for His earthly stay", and,

As a flower shines brightly in a pad of leaves
This wonderful land of Utkal shines with all her
virtues.....
Where gods come from all over Bharat to inhabit,
And which burns dross out of man
As fire burns dross out of gold.

These sentiments have taken a different turn in *Chilika*, where the poet moans considering the present plight of his land which is so beautiful and so charming. He addresses goddess Saraswati,

Oh, goddess, tell me, for what sin,
Your kindness is so less for Utkal;
She is a land of beauty
And yet, without your kindness,
She is like a woman without clothes,
Like a wild-flower in wilderness,
Spurned and ignored.

But Radhanath's sentiments were not always confined to Orissa. He has often gone beyond, to the country as a whole. Though in *Mahajatra* he extols Utkal

as the best land in Bharat, the poem is basically about India, its past glory and present plight. The nationalistic conviction is an integral part of the poet's total poetic consciousness, and its clearest expression is probably in a singularly interesting poem, entitled *Shivajink Utchaha Bakyā* (The Exhortations of Shivaji). Generally the poem is localized in the sense that it has its references to a particular time and community. But it is a symbolic poem, and shows in unmistakable terms, the poet's anger and resentment against the contemporary foreign domination.

Now the cruel Javanas rule,
And the power of Khatriyas is of no avail;
This land of ours is not ours,
Fie, fie, on our courage, on our power,
Fie on our pride !

And elsewhere, in the same poem, he speaks of 'Mother India',

This land of Bharat, our Mother,
There is no land as holy,
She is a mine of rare, wonderful gems,
She is best of all lands.

Radhanath was probably one of the earliest poets in India to compose a national song in Sanskrit, which begins 'Sarbeshan no Janani Bharat—Dharanikalpalateyn'. It was composed in 1908, immediately before his death, and was meant to be sung as an inaugural song at the Utkal Union Conference at Puri.

Radhanath's lead in voicing nationalistic sentiments was taken up by his contemporaries and juniors. Thus his close-friend and poet, Madhusudan Rao (1853-1912), who otherwise composed fine devotional lyrics, also wrote eulogistically about Orissa and India. Some of his such poems were collected together in 1908, in a volume entitled *Utkalgatha* (The Songs of Orissa), which was

dedicated to Madhusudan Das, the great leader and patriot. It contained poems in celebration of Orissa's beauty, places of worship and importance as well as past heritage. There were also references to India's glory as well as to the country's great names and great deeds. Even earlier, in a poem entitled *Bharata Bhabana* (The Thoughts about India), the poet, while feeling unhappy at the country's present condition, has almost ecstatically gone back to the past—the past of great thoughts, great deeds and great faith—almost by way of compensation and contrast. But Madhusudan's clearest sentiments were seen in his hopes for the future which he presumes would be much better than the present. Thus in a poem entitled *Nabajuga* (New Age) he draws people's attention to the glimmerings of a new dawn,

Oh brothers, look at the sky !
The night of sorrow ends
And dawn breaks,
And light of love from heaven
 is scattered everywhere;
See, how the golden light of love
Touches the crown of Bharat,
See, how the scattered pieces of Bharat
Are joining together, in one unison.
Sing, sing together—
Glory to Bharat !

Another of Radhanath's contemporaries, and a good friend, Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924), a fine poet from western Orissa, voiced his nationalistic feelings by drawing the attention of readers to the need of developing one's own language, which he pointed out, was like one's own mother. This was particularly relevant in the contemporary context against the detractors of Oriya language. In a poem entitled *Utkal Bharatink Ukti* (The Statement of Utkal Bharati), Utkal Bharati, the goddess of Oriya Language,

requests her sons to beautify her, as befits their own mother, with grace and dignity, and not crudely, neither in imitation of foreign models. Some of her references are extremely revealing and throb with intense emotion.

Dress me as befits my body,
But please, don't cut my body
 because of dress;
Pair my nails if they are long,
And put colour on them,
But please, don't cut my nose if it is high.....
Please, don't put a hat on my head,
And please, don't take away my bangles,
And please remember
To put a paint of vermilion, always,
On my forehead.
The innumerable streams of Andes mountains
Cannot flood your land,
And who will take away your heart's heat
Unless my holy stream flows across it.

The time was around the beginning of 20th century—the beginning time for the famous organisation Utkal Union Conference. The spirit of nationalism, particularly as related to Oriya speaking areas and Oriya language, was very much in the air. Apart from Radhanath, Madhusudan and Gangadhar, other important writers of the time, such as Phakir Mohan Senapati, the novelist and poet, and Nandakishor Bal, the poet, also responded to the spirit of the times. Thus Phakir Mohan wrote poems such as *Utkala Krushak* (The Farmers of Orissa), *Utkal Bhumi* (The Land of Orissa), *Utkal Jubaka* (The Youth of Orissa) and *Utkala Bhramana* (Travels through Orissa) etc., and Nandakishor concentrated on giving the details of Oriya rural life which earned him the fond title *Pallikabi* (The Village-poet). But the man who consciously brought Oriya nationalism at par with Indian nationalism and equated it with Congress agitation and struggle for Independence, was

Gopabandhu Das (1877-1928), himself a political leader almost of the stature of Madhusudan Das. He was an active member of Utkal Union Conference, and himself set up a national school at Satyabadi, near Puri, in 1909, which was in a way the precursor of the more famous school set up by Tagore at Santiniketan, in 1911. He became a member of Bihar and Orissa Legislative Assembly in 1917 and joined National Congress immediately after that. He was imprisoned in 1923-24, during the Non-Cooperation movement, and till his death, which happened untimely when he was 50, he came to occupy a position of love and respect in the minds of people as a great nationalist leader. Most of Gopabandhu's important poems were written during his imprisonment at Hazaribagh Jail, in Bihar. Apart from their nationalistic content, coming from a political leader and social reformer whose attitudes were clear and straight, the tone of the poems was also clear and direct. But they are full of emotional intensity, and what draws readers towards him was his deep conviction and sincerity. For him the individual and the nation were one, and as his individual self merged in the nation, all the sorrows of the nation came back to be manifested as the pains and sufferings of the individual. Nationalism has been the main orientation in Gopabandhu's poetry, and the structure of his poetic emotion was shaped by that. In an earlier poem entitled *Rela Upare Chilika Darsan* (On Seeing Chilika from the Train) he refers to Orissa,

The same mountains are there,
And the same forests,
And the same river beds full of same stones,
But where is that heroism?—
The old pride of Oriya nation.

Again, laterly, in a different poem, and in a reference to Barabati, the famous ruined fort at Cuttack, he contrasts Orissa's present plight with the past glory.

Oh wind, you might have played at Barabati
 In those glorious days,
 But what do you see at Barabati today—
 Is it dream or reality ?.....
 Once camphor vanishes and cloth remains
 At least the cloth keeps the memory of camphor,
 But once cloth is burnt
 And only ashes remain,
 Tell me, who will have patience to tolerate ?

Elsewhere, in his two famous collections, *Bandira*
Atmakatha (The Soliloquies of a Prisoner) and *Karakabita*
 (The Poems from the Prison), he comes directly to Indian
 nationalism and to the ills of foreign domination,

The rules that never benefit the people,
 The rules that torture and pain people,
 The manipulation that brings one nation to another,
 That keeps one nation eternally subservient to another,
 The guile that makes thirty crores of Indians
 As foreigners in their own land,
 As dogs in their own country,
 And make my countrymen starve,
 And make my mother-India work as a slave at
 another's door,—
 Those are not my rules,
 My forefathers and rishis don't approve them,
 They violate the justice and amity of *Arya dharma*.
 I declare, I will not obey them,
 I declare, it's not a sin to disobey,
 It is Bharata's destiny to rise and destroy them forever.

Gopabandhu was ably assisted by two other fine
 poets, who had also assisted him in running the Satyabadi
 School, and who were also political leaders and social
 reformers and were actively engaged in the movement for
 unification of Oriya speaking tracts. They were Nilakantha
 Das (1884-1967) and Godabaris Mishra (1886-1956). The
 former wrote an excellent Kavya on Konarka, and the latter

wrote a number of lyrics, particularly fine ballads, based on local tales and anecdotes. The poem on Konarka, entitled *Konarke* (In Konarka) by Nilakantha has two parts. The first part gives an account of a stormy, moonlit night at Konarka, and the clear morning next day, and the second part narrates a tragic love-romance related to the building of Konarka temple. Though there have been references to present day misery and plight in the poem, on the whole both the parts invoke the spirit of courage and adventure of the old, past days, and a veiled anger against the present torture and exploitation. Similarly in Godabaris's poetry, particularly in his collection *Alekhika* (The Pictures) the poet has portrayed the past glory of Orissa through a number of well-written and well-chosen tales and stories. In the poems of Nilakantha and Godabaris there are elements of both hope and diffidence, but in Gopabandhu's poetry there is the additional projection of a vision—vision of a new land and new country, free of torture and oppression, and full of freedom of spirit and movement.

Something akin to Gopabandhu's 'vision' can be seen in Lakhmikanta Mohapatra's (1889-1953) popular poem *Bande Utkala Janani* (Hail to Thee, Mother Utkal). The poem has the frame of a national anthem and was influenced by the famous nationalistic song 'Bande Mataram'. Yet it typically expressed Oriya nationalistic sentiments through a portrait of Orissa's beauty and plenty. Its beginning is interesting,

I worship thee, Mother Utkal,
Always smiling, always sweet-tongued,
Oh, Mother, mother, mother !
The holy seas wash your body,
The line of palms dot your shores,
The white rivers, and water-drenched air,
Oh, Mother, mother, mother !

This love for 'mother' is seen elsewhere in a fine woman-poet, Kuntala Kumari Sabat (1900-1938) who spent most of her time in Delhi as a doctor. In a poem entitled *Janani Tohar Mohan Murati*, (Oh, Mother, your graceful shape) she expressed her affection as follows.

Oh, mother, your graceful shape,
Is like sandal-paste on my heart,
And your dense forests and mountains
Are like heavenly gardens to me...

Padmacharan Patnaik (1885-1956), another good poet of the time, picked up Dhauli, the mountain near Bhubaneswar, near which Ashoka's historic Kalinga battle took place, as a place full of past memories, now ruined, like Konarka or Barabati, to express twin sentiments of glory in the past and unhappiness at the present. The poet's feelings even go beyond the limitations of time and place, and have been expanded into the wider fields of the country and the nation, where the poet grieves the ill-luck of his country when many others have gone forward and achieved success. The same feelings have also been reflected in a number of poems of Mayadhar Mansinha (1905-1973), the well-known poet and educationist. In one of his poems entitled *Mahanadire Jyostna Bihar* (Boating in the Mahanadi in Moonlit night) as the poet links the past glory with the present feelings of diffidence, he becomes aware of the beauty of the moonlit night and the eternal grace of nature. But the feelings of sorrow and unhappiness continue,

Why not the nation ended,
When the glory ended ?
Why couldn't destiny strike it down forever ?
To live on like a skeleton before the world
Is hundred times worse than death.

I have mentioned earlier how spirit of nationalism in Oriya poetry got equated with struggle for freedom.

This became particularly so after 1920, with the beginning of Non-Cooperation movement, the poems of Gopabandhu Das being the first clear expression of those sentiments. As intensity of freedom struggle grew, more and more poets were drawn into its ambit, till the whole thing more or less came to a natural end with the achievement of Independence, after which the nationalistic poetry largely lost its old appeal to the newer generation. One of the last, and probably one of the finest examples of nationalistic poetry in Oriya, which was particularly equated with contemporary political agitation was *Baji Rout* by Sachidananda Routray, a major modern poet after Independence. It was a long poem, with an exalted, rhetorical tone, and first published in 1938. The background related to a 12 year old boatmanboy, called Baji Rout, who was shot dead during Ex-State Agitation, at Dhenkanal, because he refused to ferry the soldiers of the King across the river in one dark night in 1938. The boy's body was brought to Cuttack and cremated with full honour due to a martyr. The poem idolizes the young hero, and shows him as a beacon light in the prevailing darkness.

It's not a funeral pyre, oh my friend,
It's an ever burning flame under the country's
darkness;
It's not to burn itself out,
It's to burn others—always, and ever after...
He is not anybody's son,
He is that eternal seed of freedom
That grows through many poet's dream.

As has been said before, nationalism has been a strong element in Oriya Poetry, particularly before Independence. It began with Radhanath, after the great famine of 1866, and for about 70 years innumerable poets subscribed to this strong stream. Generally the poets have felt piqued at

the contemporary situation and have gone back to the more cohesive and more glorious days of the past by way of relief and compensation. Again many have exhibited anger and irritation not only at the foreign rule, but at themselves and at their own countrymen for their timidity, inaction and passive acceptance of adverse and undignified situations. Again, many others have thought it fit to join the main stream of freedom struggle to voice their hopes and aspirations within a collective, community attitude and conviction. On the whole, the poetry of nationalism in Oriya, though not as chequered to the extent it may be elsewhere, had a strong unified approach and understanding almost at par with similar poetry elsewhere in India. Yeats termed nationalism as a public theme. It may be so. But it is basically an individual's exploration into public mind, and to that extent Oriya poetry has become both viable and substantial.

RAMAYANA TRADITION IN ORIYA : A STUDY

Though the origin of Oriya language can be traced to a time before the 10th century A.D., the written literature in Oriya began sometime in the 14th century, and the two early important literary productions in Oriya were the Mahabharat and the Ramayana. The Mahabharat was written by Sarala Das in the 15th century, and the Ramayana by Balaram Das, a little later, in the early part of the 16th century. Both were based on the original epics and largely conformed to their patterns. Thus, the Mahabharat was divided into 18 parts and the Ramayana into 7 parts, and the familiar sequences of events and the host of familiar characters were all neatly arranged and displayed, the purpose being to promote the knowledge and experiences of great epics among common men who had no access to Sanskrit originals. The style of writing and the language they used also conformed to this primary purpose. They depended on contemporary conversational language and used a metrical pattern which had a poetical rhythmicity combined with the elasticity and freedom of prose. It was called Dandi metre or *Dandi bruta* and since the epics were meant to be read out, the auditory aspect was important, and the metre moved like the waves of the sea, rising and falling, stretching and contracting, so that the attention of the listeners is kept up in the relaxed, lazy hours in the evenings. Also what they hear, linguistically, is only an extension of their daily routine of conversation so that the mind is not unnecessarily taxed to comprehend new words or new verbal conjugation of words.

This is one aspect—this emphasis on contemporary, conversational language. Both Sarala and Balaram used contemporary Oriya language with great skill and

dexterity. For the first time sensitive writers were found out who could exploit the virgin richness of the language with imagination and competence. At the same time they succeeded in imposing a form and discipline on the wild nebulosity of the contemporary speech which not only communicated its essential strength but also became a model for a large number of subsequent writers. The other aspect was equally important. It was manifested in the freedom to be found both in Sarala and Balaram—the freedom from the restraints of the original epics. What Sarala and Balaram did, is not what is called translation. Neither they indulged in adaptation or recreation. They took the original frame—none of the major events or sequences of events were distorted, or the actions of the major characters changed. But they brought in innumerable details—physical, social, political and psychological—in conformity with the contemporary times and contemporary taste, and the Oriya Mahabharat and Ramayana, instead of being the pale imitations of the great original epics, became great Oriya epics themselves, full of freshness and vigour, projecting the confidence and pride of a nation at the apex of its political power during the reigns of Emperor Kapileन्द्रa Dev and the subsequent kings of the Sun Dynasty.

The scholars have found out many 'deviations' in Sarala and Balaram particularly in contrast to the original epics. No doubt it is an academic exercise, but a useful one, and it particularly highlights not the so called 'deviations' but the originality of the concerned writers. A good local example is the story of Rushyasrunga in the 'Ramayana' of Balaram Das. In the original Valmiki Ramayana the story is given briefly, as a narration by the charioteer Sumanta to King Dasaratha. Balaram has taken up the main outlines, such as absence of rains in Angadesha, the King's worries, the advice given to him by the Brahmins and Ministers, the choice of prostitute women to bring Rushyasrunga from the forest, the deception played by the women on

Rushyasruna, the coming of Rushyasruna to Angadesha and the final coming of rains. But the main outlines have been filled in with innumerable details and with such turns and changes, so that an almost functional account of the original epic, now vibrates with the force and excitement of an intense human drama in Balaram. On the one hand the king worries and despairs at the loss of rains, and the lack of fertility assumes an almost symbolic proportion in modern terms. On the other, as the saint's innocence is seen along with the urbane sexual wiliness of the dancing women, the account is elevated to an almost archetypal form where the primitive purity and innocence is not only matched but is ultimately defeated by wily, permissive urban culture. In addition, there are perceptive accounts of place, natural objects and of animals and birds, as well as the excitement of journey in the rivers, and the moods of fear, uncertainty and hesitation on the parts of women who go to a distant land almost in a spirit of adventure. The journey by river from Angadesha to the forest of four-hills, where Rushyasruna stayed and back, took 40 days, the poet points out, and it was mostly through impenetrable jungle full of wild and strange animals and birds. This is how the poet describes—

And they went through days and nights without rest,
And through innumerable forests and hills,
Dark, impenetrable, fearsome;
Strange things they saw and strange sights,
And birds and animals, looking astonished, amazed;
The tigers run after deer,
And lions on elephants, tearing, roaring,
And wild cats quarrel everywhere,
And peacocks dance and scream;
And the strange melancholic cry
From inside the deep, dark forest.

Differently, another good example of Balaram's originality can be seen in the poet's account of Rama's entry

into the city of Mithila. Valmiki does not speak anything about it. But Balaram describes Rama's entry in great detail and with saucy references. This is seen particularly with references to young women, irrespective of whether married or unmarried, who madly ran out of their houses into the streets to have a look at Rama. All their dresses were dishevelled and they all were extremely excited :

They all ran, excited, crazed,
And the Love's arrow pierced every heart;
Somebody's clothes slipped from her breast,
Somebody lifted her clothes to show her thighs,
Somebody smiled, somebody cast a sidelong glance,
Somebody showed her armpits,
Somebody opened her tresses;—
And their jewels fell from their hair,
And their chains fell from their necks,
And their flowers were scattered
And their clothes flew like flags in the wind;
They all ran, heavy with youth,
Crowded the streets and pushed their elders,
And tears of happiness streamed from their eyes.

Balaram was not only the first, but the greatest writer who adapted the original Ramayana and made of it a great Oriya epic. Apart from its imaginative excellence, it was almost a complete document like Sarala's 'Mahabharat', of the times he lived in, that is, the later part of the 15th and the early part of the 16th century. That was a time, as I have already pointed out, of great confidence and pride for the Oriyas, and Balaram's great work was a part of that ebullient Oriya spirit. That was almost the time of Tulsi Das, and Balaram's pre-eminence in Oriya, particularly as related to Ramayana, was almost like Tulsi's pre-eminence in Hindi—an unchallenged, unparalleled creative excellence.

Balaram's model and inspiration was followed by many subsequent writers, and at least three important

streams in Ramayana tradition could be seen in Oriya poetry after Balaram. The first was to continue the Ramayana as such, that is, the continuous effort on the part of the poets to acquaint the new and newer generations with the stories of Ramayana for their entertainment and edification. This was never done as comprehensively as Balaram did, but in much shorter form, in 7 parts no doubt, but mostly sticking to the essentials, as a racy, narrative account, and almost always in the form of songs. The songs had a lot of metrical varieties and were often composed with familiar and popular *ragas* or tunes. These were widely sung by the villagers and often staged as musical performances in the summer nights. These were called 'Lilas', and the tradition of Ramlila has continued in the Orissan villages till contemporary times. The most popular of these musical compositions and probably the best, was by Biswanath Khuntia, who belonged to 18th century. It was entitled 'Vichitra Ramayana' and contained 289 *chhandas* or musical chapters, in 7 *kandas* or parts. Its entire emphasis is how best, and in essentials, to tell the Ramayana story, which it does in great competence and in memorable musical pieces. Many of its *ragas* were well-known, popular tunes, such as Ramakeri, Chakrakeli, Jamak, Kamodi, Chokhi, Kanada etc., and they not only make the perennially appealing stories of Rama and Sita more appealing, but they also communicate the ever-refreshing scents and sounds of Orissa's innumerable villages, and their paddy fields and mango groves.

The second line of development related to Kavyas which took up particular sequences from Ramayana, or may be one or two major sequences, in a short form, and from particular points of view, and organized them in imaginative rhetorical compositions. Though Kavyas constituted a large part of ancient and medieval Oriya poetry, and in a span of about 400 years, from the 16th to 19th century more than 60 Kavyas were written, the Kavyas dealing with

Rama theme or Rama stories are not many. The first such work which had elements of a Kavya but which was in a sense, a recreation of a part of the great epic and strictly did not belong to the Kavyas genre, was entitled 'Vichitra Ramayana' by Sarala Das, before Balaram. It is based on the 'Uttara Kanda' of Ramayana, though with a number of deviations, and narrates the story of Ramayana beginning from the banishment of Sita from Ayodha till her death in Ayodha, in the court of Rama. It was one of the three works of the great poet, the other two being the 'Mahabharat' and 'Chandi Purana', and was probably written before the 'Mahabharat'. It did not have much of imaginative aspects one comes across in Kavyas, whether thematically or stylistically, and yet parts of it throb with intense emotion, and its language had the vibrant force of the contemporary colloquial speech. But the first Kavya in rhymed metre dealing with Rama-theme was entitled 'Rama Bibha' (The Marriage of Rama), which was written after Balaram's great work, in the 16th century, by Arjun Das. The story centres on the marriage of Rama and his brothers, and Rama's subsequent return to Ayodha, and his encounter on the way with Parasuram. The story is told racy, in simple language, and in many ragas, with occasional use of imagey. Thus this is how the poet describes the anger of Parasuram and the fear he injected in Dasaratha's army—

His lips trembled and eyes became red,
 And he breathed rapidly
 Like the winds of the Last Conflagration.
 As he rose the seven seas and islands trembled
 And a great panic seized the court of Indra.
 He rose up in great anger clanging his weapons
 As if the earth's axel was uprooted and
 Thrown into the great ocean.
 Then a great panic seized Dasaratha' soldiers,
 'He comes, he comes,' they shouted,

And groups of jackals howled all around,
And all fled—chariots, elephants,
Across the forest.

But the best work in this Kavya tradition was 'Baidehisa Bilas' (The Story of Baidehi) by Upendra Bhanja, the famous 18th century poet. It is the complete story of Ramayana in 52 chhandas or verse-chapters, till Rama's return to Ayodha with Sita, and their coronation. Upendra took his models from Sanskrit, including Kalidas, as well as from Balaram, and modelled each chhanda as a perfect specimen of stylistic and imaginative excellence with liberal use of imagery and rhetorical devices. Upendra's chhandas are often sung in the countryside in Orissa and many of them have become a part and parcel of the rich poetic heritage of Oriya consciousness. A fine example is when Sita is brought to the marriage-altar. She is as fresh as flowers and as beautiful, and she is decorated with bright jewels and ornaments. She comes 'walking on the heads of misfortunes and makes Rama happy', who feels as if 'soft sandalwood is pasted on his body'. She is Sita, the 'epitome of all sweetness and purity', and she has 'killed the hearts and scattered the seeds of love'. In this connection two more such Kavyas may be mentioned. One preceded Upendra, by his grandfather Dhananjoy Bhanja (17th century) and was entitled 'Raghunath Bilas', and the other after Upendra, by Jadumani Mohapatra (18th-19th century), and was entitled 'Raghab Bilas'. They are like Upendra's famous Kavya, more or less a retelling of Ramayana story, and in the same rhetorical tradition, and in 'riti' style.

A fine Kavya in this tradition, and with a difference, was written and published in the modern times, in 1915. It was 'Tapaswini' (The Lady Ascetic) by Gangadhar Meher, a fine, pioneering modern poet. It is in 11 'sargas' or verse-chapters, each 'sarga' having a different 'raga' and narrates the happiness and ordeals of Sita in Valmiki's hermitage

during her banishment. The entire story has been told from the point of view of Sita, she being the most important character who gathers plenty of love and adoration from all around, including birds, animals, flowers, rivers, even dawn and moonlit night. The account of dawn breaking over the hermitage, and coming to wake up Sita from her sleep, is one of the most popular pieces in modern Oriya literature :

She came like blossoming lotus-flower
In happiness, to see Sita,
And holding in her leaf-like palms diamond-like dew,
And staying outside her house,
She spoke in Cuckoo's voice—
'O lady, wake up' ! 'The night is over'.
The wind sang songs,
The bumble bee played on lyre,
The pitcher birds like heralds sang Sita's eulogies,
And the black song-bird came and said sweetly,
'O Sita, the great queen, wake up' ! 'The night is over.'

'Tapaswini' is a fine work of art, where both nature and man are competing organic beings, and where the readers are taken out of the traditional Ramayana moorings to contemplate on a fine human being, that is, Sita, with sympathy and understanding, and where Ramayana sheds off its remoteness to become a part of the modern man's livingness and his desire for tranquility.

The third stream can be traced in short poetical pieces, written from time to time, by different authors, on small, apparently minor items from Ramayana, to illustrate a mood or motive or an aspect of a character or a part of a situation. Probably the first such piece was by Sankar Das (16th century). It is an address-poem, to cuckoo, and narrates the unhappiness of Kausalya thinking of the ordeals of Rama in the forest as the seasons change. As the months pass, the seasons change, and the rigour of nature also changes. Thus the cold of winter changes to parching heat

of summer and then to darkness of incessant rains. Kausalya laments what would be the fate of a shelterless man in the forest ! Even when the seasons change to better, in autumn and spring, to clear horizons and moonlit nights, the sorrow is equally pinching thinking of better days in the past, in the palace. It is an interesting poem, and shows the simple but intense unhappiness of a mother who has missed her child. An equally fine poem in this category was entitled 'Janaki Smaran Chautisa' (In Memory of Janaki) by Dinakrushna Das, a major poet and contemporary of Upendra Bhanja. It is in the form of a 'chautisa' that is, a 4-line stanza to each of the letters of alphabet, and a total 34 stanzas, narrating Rama's sorrows at Malyabanta hills on being separated from Sita. Rama goes over many details of their intimate conjugal life, fears that he may not see Sita again, and feels lost that this could at all happen to him :

O my lady, I hoped so much from you,
 But you cut my throat and vanished in the jungle,
 O my dearest, I am lost !
 O my fair complexioned one, how could you act so !
 We left our homes and came to the forest
 O my Cuckoo-voiced !
 Who took you away ? And how ?
 O dearest, O round-breasted one !
 I know the gods don't care for my sorrow.

Dinakrushna's poem throbs with passion, and Rama's sorrow becomes like the sorrow of anybody who is so separated from his lady.

Two other poems that may be mentioned in this connection are by Madhusudan Rao (1853-1913), a major modern poet. Madhusudan wrote two poems entitled 'Sri Ram Banabasa' (Ram's Banishment) and the other 'Sita Banabasa' (Sita's Banishment). Obviously the element of melancholy inherent in both the situations attracted the

poet, and the poems too, have a strong sense of melancholy and unhappiness. Thus as in the former, the condition of Ayodha on hearing Rama's banishment :

How shall I describe the condition of Ayodha,
Sunken suddenly in great melancholy,
Tears flowed from thousands of eyes,
And a great moaning cry filled thousands of homes,
The bright, glorious morning vanished
And a deep darkness covered all.

Ramayana like the Mahabharat has been a potent factor in the growth of Oriya literature as a whole though its influence has not been as deep as the latter's has been on modern Oriya writers. Yet it has played a strong role in shaping attitudes, motives and visions of Oriya writers, particularly poets, during the last about 400 years. In contrast to Krishna literature which brought deep passions of love and separation and of involvement and ecstasy, Rama literature in Oriya led the creative mind to greater degree of contemplation and meditation as well as to a larger element of tranquility, and in essence, to a fuller understanding of life and livingness. As Tagore pointed out long ago, this livingness is the strongest aspect of Ramayana. It is not in facts, but somewhere beyond facts that it provides illumination into the pattern of living in India—an illumination vibrant and joyful. Oriya creative spirit, like Indian creative spirit elsewhere, shares this illumination and joy.

THE MAHABHARAT AND THE MODERN ORIYA WRITERS : A STUDY OF ATTITUDE

At the outset, probably it would be interesting to look briefly at the past, at the first Oriya work on Mahabharat, which incidentally was the first great work in Oriya literature. The time was 15th century Orissa, the time of great Gajapati king, Gajapati Kapilendra Dev, who ruled over a vast stretch of land, from Ganga in the north to Kavery in the south, all along the eastern coast of India, and the writer was Sarala Das, a Sudra poet, who belonged to Cuttack district, a place about 60 kms. towards the east, from the present Cuttack city, and probably participated or had intimate knowledge about many warfares which Kapilendra waged during his regime. His Mahabharat was complete work, complete in the 18 Parvas, but instead of a translation, it was what Dryden called an 'imitation', where 'liberty' was assumed not only to vary from the words and senses but 'to forsake them both as one sees the occasion'. Sarala Mahabharat, as it is popularly called, was to a large measure an original work, and to that extent it laid the foundation of subsequent Oriya literature. Sarala adopted the general frame of the original Sanskrit epic but made extensive changes in the details, through omissions, additions and elaborations, all along the purpose being to produce such a work that would be reckoned as having the warmth, vitality and intimacy of the local life, particularly of the riverine delta of the Mahanadi to which he belonged.

The great epic was a complete document of its times and it reflected all types of manners, habits, faiths and activities of a proud, self-conscious and empire-building nation. The writing of Mahabharat, it may be pointed out, was not just another poetical act, it was basically the

projection of a way of life and an integrated attitude towards living as a sustaining force at a time when the very existence of the nation was being threatened by continuous Muslim invasions from the north and the west (in fact the nation would be losing its independence in less than 100 years, in mid-16th century), and this he did through a known mythological structure, through familiar stories, characters etc. which together provided an almost aesthetic distance to the whole work.

Oriya literature almost began from Sarala, and it was mostly in poetry till mid-19th century, when other literary forms developed. Sarala's great work influenced many subsequent poets who took episodes and stories from it and developed them into Kavyas. Some important examples were *Ushabhilas* (The Desires of Usha) by Sisu Sankar (16th century), *Kapatapasa* (The False Dice Game) by Bhima Dhibar (17th century), *Subhadra Parinaya* (The Marriage of Subhadra) by Upendra Bharaja (17th-18th century) and *Sulakhyana* (Sulakhyana) by Abhimanyu Samanta Sinhar (18th century). Except *Kapatapasa* the other three were written in medieval Kavya-style with subject-matters related to love. Thus *Ushabhilas* deals with the love-relationship between Usha, Banasura's daughter, and Anirudha, Pradyumna's son, the subsequent quarrel between Sri Krishna and Banasura, and the final happy resolution; *Subhadra Parinaya* deals with love-relationship between Subhadra and Arjuna, Subhadra's abduction, the impending battle between Balaram and Arjuna and the final happy resolution; and *Sulakhyana* deals with love-relationship between Sulakhyana, Duryodhana's daughter and Samba, Sri Krishna's son, the impending battle between Duryodhana on the one hand and Krishna and Balaram on the other, and the final happy resolution. The purpose in all the three Kavyas has been mainly to entertain the readers with fictional and musical elaborations of youthful love in ornamental and rhetorical language. The attitude was clear.

It was not so much as to project a new point of view on the episodes of Mahabharat, or not as in Sarala to provide a national saga, but to conform to current Kavya-tradition as much as possible, which was basically a literary-tradition and literary-style without any relationship whatsoever with the fundamentals of contemporary living. But *Kapatapasa*, a very popular work, was an exception. It is a small Kavya in 10 cantos and it mainly gives an account of Draupadi's insult in the court of Duryodhana, after the defeat of Yudhishthir in the dice-game. The poet was a fisherman by caste, but what is more important was that, it was at a level different from the rhetorical Kavya-tradition of the time. It was written in a simple, colloquial language with many realistic details, and with a strong flavour of naturalness. In details it conforms the original in Sarala, but the main purpose has been to highlight the basic nature of main characters with a view to moralizing and providing a lesson in reform to the evil and wrong-doer.

But until one comes to later part of the 19th century, to a poet like Radhanath Roy (1848-1908), incidentally the first most important modern Oriya poet, one does not become aware of powerful poetic attitudes and reactions to the great epic, in consonance with the problems and complications of modern life and modern existence. Radhanath composed two Kavyas and two long poetical pieces based on Mahabharat, of which three were direct narrations of Mahabharat episodes, and the other one, one of the finest works of the poet, while beginning with an important Mahabharat situation deviated into many other details. In all these Mahabharat provides the structure as well as the motive-force, but the readers become strongly conscious of a new poet, new taste and times. Of these the most important is the last one, entitled *Mahajatra* (The Last Journey). It was conceived as an epic to be completed in 30 cantos of which 7 were only completed. It was written in blank verse, the first such attempt in Oriya poetry, and to

that extent merits comparison with Michael Madhusudan's Bengali epic *Meghanada Baddha*. But in subject matter, in treatment, as well as in attitude, it completely differs from Michael's work. Thus it begins with the Pandavas making preparations for their final exit, and leaving Hastinapur for ever. But instead of moving northwards towards the Himalayas, they move to the east, cross the entire Gangetic plain, and taking a turn to the south near the sea, on the coast, they come to Utkal, to Puri. At Puri, on the sea-beach, they were met by Agni, the God of Fire, a resplendent, divine being who rose from the sea. On his request Arjun sacrificed all his glittering weapons in the sea. Then Agni gave company to the Pandavas and guided them across Orissa and through middle India to the west, and finally came to Sahyadri Hills on the Western Ghats. There, while sitting on the Sahyadri Hills, in the last hours of the last night of Dwapar Yuga, and gifted with a future-vision by Agni, the Pandavas saw first of all, the descent of Kali, the Evil, with all his forces on earth, and secondly, the future history of India till the Muslim invasion of India in the 12th century, and the battles of King Pruthiraj Chauhan of Delhi. Thus apparently what the Pandavas saw and the poet points out, was an account of India's history full of political uncertainties and dissensions, till India lost her independence. But basically what concerns the poet is given in the statement of Agni—a serious concern for a continuous decay in values and a fall in the quality of life, when the old Aryan strength of mind and character is lost, and the whole nation is taken over by Kali or the Evil and his followers. The poet's agony is deep and pointed—"The flood of sin is coming/And the noble mind that may save Bharat/Will be drowned like an island in the waters of sin/Alas, in this deluge all will be lost./Like no place for a chandan tree in the rank growth of forest/You (Yudhisthir) will have no place here". And again,

All will be there,
 The same country, the hills, the rivers,
 The cities and places of pilgrimage.
 All will be as before,
 But the man will be only man in name,
 He will be worse than animal
 In the changing times, in Bharat.

In fact the motivating word for the poet is 'dharma', and elaborating on a Mahabharat situation he points out how or to what extent 'dharma' has lost its roots in the quagmire of sin, evil and selfishness. In addition, that which has been woven as an almost integral part of the total structure of *Mahajatra* (as also in all other poems of Radhanath) is the poet's strong concern for Orissa as an entity, that is, all details beginning from rivers and mountains to people and places and to gods and goddesses. Even the poet's admiration has risen to such rhetorical statement as in the address of Agni to Pandavas—"It's your great good luck that you are here,/At this holiest place in the whole world/Which the great Lord has chosen as His only abode in the whole of Bharat/ And as a flower crowns a pad of leaves/So this land/This bright, glorious Utkal, crowns all." As I said earlier, in *Mahajatra*, the Mahabharat situation only provides a stepping-stone to other types of feelings which on the one hand are related to an awareness of waste and decay, and the presence of evil in life, and on the other, to emotions of pleasure, excitement and joy in contemplating the country's manifold beauties, and thirdly, pride and melancholy associated with a strong though subtle nationalistic spirit.

But this is not the case with the other poems of Radhanath that deal with Mahabharat themes, though they have their own individual merits. Thus the other Kavya *Beni Sanhar* which deals with Dushasan's last battle with Bhima, in which he was defeated and killed by the latter, who

bound the loose hairs of Draupadi as a fulfilment of his vow, closely follows the Mahabharat episode. But the poet has his own purpose, that is, to justify action against the evil and sinful, and to uphold the powers of 'dharma'. Thus, first of all, the poem narrates the action in concrete, physical terms, even at times, in gruesome physical details. Secondly, there is a continuing chain of similes and comparisons largely related to mutual hostilities, and thirdly the tone is exclusively organized to communicate a strong emotion of anger. As in *Mahajatra*, so also here, while the mythological situation continues, the reader at the same time becomes aware of a new sensibility and new times. In this connection another poetical piece of Radhanath may be cited. It is interesting in the sense that it has psychological bearings and it almost exclusively communicates a sense of pathos and despair. This piece, which is based on an original account in Sarala, is entitled *Duryodhanara Raktanadi Santarana* (The Crossing of the River of Blood by Duryodhana). It describes how Duryodhana while escaping from the battle ground of Kurukhetra at the end, alone and helpless, is obstructed by a wide river of blood flowing from the innumerable dead. In his attempts to cross the river as quickly as possible to safety, he tried to take the help of floating corpses of great heroes like Drona and Karna etc, but failed as each one of the corpses sank under his weight. Finally a corpse, looking bright even in death, carried him across, and when Duryodhana wanted to know whose it was, to his great woe, he found that it was his eldest son Lakhman's. There is pity and irony in the situation as well as the traditional meaning of the son supporting the father. But the new, psychological attitude and the approach to reality are obvious in the account.

Radhanath's model was taken up by his friend Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924), in his kavya *Kichaka Baddha*

(The Killing of Kichaka). The story follows the sequences of Mahabharat, with the advances of Kichaka to Draupadi and ending with his death by Bhima. But the treatment was new, almost in the manner of Radhanath's Kavyas, with flights of imagination, chains of imagery, lively accounts of morning, evening and spring, and above all in extremely musical cantos. Radhanath himself, in a brief preface to the book (1904), pointed this out when he referred to Gangadhar's power to present the ancient tale in a 'new shape'. In fact both Gangadhar and Radhanath had in view the need of a new time, and were catering to the new taste of a generation trained in western education and aware of the rich heritage of western literature. The attitude to Mahabharat was undergoing a change. The attempt was to treat Mahabharat no longer as a store-house of stories and story-sequences with didactic or moralistic lessons, but in terms of its significance in the perspective of a new poetic consciousness, by itself a product of the emerging industrial and urban society.

This attitude becomes more eloquent as we come over to relatively more modern writers around Independence. Thus Kalindi Charan Panigrahi (born 1901), an important poet and novelist, and a leader of a new poetic movement in the thirties, took up Abhimanyu's last desperate fight inside Drona's Circle-Labyrinth and his mental condition when all exits have been closed, to express modern man's predicament and his acute helplessness in the midst of completely adverse forces. Similarly another contemporary important poet, Baikunthanath Pattanaik (1904-1978), took up Arjuna's mental distress and helplessness at the death of Krishna, and particularly at his own defeat in the hands of the Dasyus on his way to Hastinapur, to express modern man's lonely and sterile condition of mind when the nourishing forces are either removed or dead. Also Sachidananda Routray (born 1918), a major poet after Independence, took up Mahabharat reference in one of his

poems entitled *Jojanagandha*. The reference was to Satyabati in her pre-marriage days, when a sweet fragrance from her body was said to have filled the atmosphere around her house. The poet refers to this fragrance and points out how eagerly he has been looking for this fragrance almost everywhere in land, in water, in clouds, in 'miles and miles of sky', far and near, in mornings and evenings. And finally, he gets it in himself, in his deepest mind. The fragrance is taken away from Satyabati and becomes his own. Similarly in another poem, entitled *Draupadira Sadhi* (The Saree of Draupadi), which the poet subtitles as 'a study about sexual behaviour', the action leading to Draupadi's nakedness at Kuru court and its final failure, has been taken up as a symbol to suggest sexual action and sexual behaviour as being perpetually present in life irrespective of time and place ('from eternal times/In innumerable bodies/In emptiness/And in points of time :), and how in final reckoning sex and death have always gone together— 'That's a declaration of love/Whether in the fields of Troy/Or on the sands of Nile/Or In Hastina in flaming camps/ Or on the banks of river of blood/Of millions and millions of soldiers/One vision/Death comes along with sex.'

Probably the poet who has made the readers most aware of Mahabharat in the recent times is Sitakant Mohapatra (born 1937). He has composed a number of poems related to Mahabharat situations and suggestions along with a whole book entitled *Astapadi* (Eight Steps), consisting of 8 long poems, related in theme and approach, where myth in general, and Mahabharat in particular, provides the main structural elements as well as poetic motifs. The relatively more important poems are, *Ajnanta-basa* (The Concealed Stay), *Abhimanyu*, *Yudhisthira*, *Duryodhana*, *Sarasajya* (The Bed of Arrows), *Krushna Kaibarta* (Krishna the Boatman), *Srikrushnank Mrutyu* (The Death of Krishna), *Jara Sabarar Sangita* (The Song of Jara,

the Hunter), *Basara Darpanare Suryasta* (The Sunset in the Mirror of the Bus) and *Duiti Janana* (Two Prayers). The poems have dense structure, and Mahabharat references have added extra dimensions to otherwise complex individual attitudes and insights. Thus the two companion poems, *Jara Sabarar Sangita* and *Srikrushnanka Mrutu*, which relate to one situation, that is, Krishna's death, have apparently two different attitudes. In the former which is in the form of Jara's soliloquy, there are references to innumerable pretences of life where divine knowledge is denied to man who is ultimately reduced to great sorrow and loneliness, whereas in the latter, it is a matter of common death, however important that may be, of a man about whose credentials many had doubts, though all agreed to consider his death as an occasion of great sorrow. But in both the poems there is basically a movement away from pretences and commonness towards a baffling, incomprehensible sensation which cannot be accounted for within the familiar terms of life, such as, sorrow and death. Similarly of the two character-poems *Duryodhana* and *Yudhisthira*, the former is a re-counting of Duryodhana as a proud, sensitive man, eager for love and understanding and basically the representative of a protest against the operation of a blind destiny. But the latter is a more complex poem. Apart from its first reference to Mahabharat it is connected with what the poet saw in 'Kanal', a modern Polish film, which narrates how, during the Second World War, when the Nazi soldiers attacked Warsaw, the Polish capital, five persons, among whom was a flute-player, tried to escape through a sewage tunnel, but finally, coming out of it, got killed. The common references are, on the one hand, to war, death and devastation, corpses and blood, and intolerable stench, and on the other, the rhythms of the flute played by the flute-player inside the sewage stink, and the memory of Yudhisthira of that most melodious flute which he had heard played on the banks of Jamuna, and in Dwaraka. At the deepest level, hopes emerge—hopes of life over stench,

waste and death as the fugitives grope through the darkness of sewer, or as Yudhishthira gropes through darkness and devastation after the great war : “And then you, Yudhishthira/ (Of our age)/You may arrive as you are/At the entrance of a new heaven/Across the scattered remnants of consciousness and time”. Similar meditations on life and death may also be noted in *Abhimanyu*. Abhimanyu as a bright, young man who died untimely under adult conspiracy, has always fascinated the imagination of poets, and it has been seen how the senior poet Panigrahi took him up as the symbol of a restless human quest for freedom from bondage, which was more or less the symbol of the times when it was written, that is, late twenties and early thirties. In Mahapatra the perception is deeper and relates to a fundamental understanding about life. Thus the coils of the Circle-Labyrinth in which Abhimanyu was caught, are like many coils of life in which all of us are caught, as ‘birds are caught in the net of a hunter’. The ‘net’ is the way of life, the poet maintains, and all includes all roads, all mountains and houses, all time and all echoes and re-echoes. No one can escape it: “Get into any room/And you can’t get out/It opens to another room/And to another/And to another/All same/All empty”. The hope (and also the strength) lies not in feeling restless but in submitting, as Abhimanyu did at the end, quietly and happily, at the inevitability of the ‘net’.

Therefore, today, I am free,
As I have crossed my roads,
And all my adolescent desires
and dreams.

Let your net be eternal,
And this illusion;
And let your labyrinth remain
strong as ever

Oh, Hunter

Ajnantabasa (the Concealed Stay) of the Pandavas at King Birat's place, which is related to an important episode of Mahabharat, has also been taken up by Mahapatra as a symbol suggesting two levels : first of all, as a happy, comfortable escape from the lies and conflicts of the past, and secondly, at a deeper level, as a movement from one set of lies to another set of lies and from one darkness to another. Thus the concealed stay brings no change, it continues the same pretences of life. *Basara Darpanare Suryasta*, an early poem of Mahapatra, shows the merging of a day-to-day familiar situation with a mysterious, incomprehensible situation taken from Mahabharat. The first situation refers to the familiar reflection in the mirror of a moving bus, of the moving landscape, seen against a sunset sky, which finally transcends to a flaming, burning universal vision as seen by Arjuna in the battle field : "All lost/All gone/Innumerable universes/All gone/All sucked by the primordial being/The rays of the setting sun took all./The flaming ball in the mirror of the bus/Is it heaven ?/Or beyond heaven ?".

The interest about Mahabharat which Mahapatra's efforts generated among Oriya poets, is probably most consistently seen in Saurindra Barik (born 1938), a fine modern poet, whose first book of poetry came out in the seventies. He has written about 70 poems dealing variously with Mahabharat situations. These are mostly character studies seen from the modern man's point of view, and accepting Mahabharat accounts as so many realistic accounts full of pain, agony and suffering, as human emotions as well as interests, come in conflict with each other. The characters include well known persons such as Bhishma, Duryodhana, Arjuna, Karna, Draupadi, Kunti, Satyabati etc. and less well known people such as Ullupi, Amba, Bellalsen etc. But everywhere the conventional Mahabharat situations have been enlivened with a new

understanding and a new dimension as a result of which the old, familiar characters come out as belonging to our time and sharing our feelings of hope and uncertainty about life. Thus there are 13 poems that relate to varying emotions as well as psychological moods of Draupadi, such as, her sorrow at being denied one husband, or her suffering at being compelled to live under certain discipline to accommodate five husbands to establish a righteous way of life, when her desires as a woman who wants to love and get love in return, as completely ignored; or her irritation at the cowardice of the Pandavas, or even her anger at the fact that inspite of being a great queen herself she had to depend upon the support of an outsider like Krishna at the time of crisis. For example her desire at the end, when she falls a prey to the icy coolness of Himavant, is both pitiable and sorrowful :

From the flaming emptiness of sacrificial fire
 To the icy coolness of Himavant,
 What do I look for ? What ?
 Is it heaven ?—
 Oh my husbands, my five husbands :
 I do not call for God,
 I call you—my last call—
 Forget your truth, Dharma,
 Take me to your lap
 And let me die there happily, peacefully.

[‘Draupadi’s Last Prayer’]

Similarly the poems about Arjuna portray the great hero’s feeling ranging from anger and irritation to dismay and loneliness, and point out the underlying paradox in his situation. Thus as the best friend of Krishna he is almost over-shadowed by the latter and whatever he does is only at the bidding of the latter. This makes Arjun sad, and he is eager to be released from Krishna’s grip and assert his own personality. Hence before the battle he not only lays down his weapons but is anxious to move away from the so

called 'grip' of dharma into 'new light, new life, new brightness and new death.'" Also after seeing the universal vision he is not only tired, he is also irritated at realizing what it means, that it takes away all his independent capacity to act, : "Now I understand/I understand all/I am nothing/No body is anything/Gandiva is nothing/It's all an echo/Reflections of your wishes/We act out only your emptiness." Therefore he is anxious that he should be released from Krishna's grip and be left alone with his sufferings :

This is the only prayer, Oh Lord,
Permit me to be Arjuna,
Permit me to dance alone,
Permit me to walk alone with my load,
Alone, alone,
All alone.

In Duryodhan, Karna, Bhishma, Kunti, everywhere, the poet, while working on the traditional associations of Mahabharat invariably moves away to areas of subtle moods and feelings. Thus Bhishma in his bed of arrows, remembers nostalgically Debabrata, his own earlier self, and how erratically he ignored the call of youth. Or Duryodhana at the end realises that all his travels, throughout his life, were towards emptiness, and life as a whole is a vast emptiness and people die only to die once again. Yudhisthir also comes to a similar realization at the end, when while looking at the great Himavant and recollecting his own long life, hazy with memory, he becomes conscious of a great emptiness, in the sky, and a great thirst in himself. And then,

Then no mountains, no pilgrims, no journey
No mist, no storm, no blueness,
No light or darkness,
No beginning or end
As if it is the end of all ends,
Emptiness of all emptiness.

I have exclusively discussed poetry so far, because it is almost exclusively in poetry that Oriya literature has showed its most sensitive reaction to Mahabharat. But a recent novel may be discussed in this connection. It is entitled *Jajnaseni* by Smt. Pratibha Ray, probably the most popular novelist today in Orissa, and the book has also achieved record sale and popularity. In about 450 pages it is a comprehensive account of Draupadi as she sees herself with relation to various Mahabharat incidents and characters, and particularly with relation to Krishna, her 'dearest friend'. In fact Draupadi's relationship with Krishna provides the main motive force in the novel. Though nothing physical, yet the strong invisible bond between the two (which is almost transcendental, one may say) almost assumes the structure of a physical intimacy. Thus the whole novel which is in the form of Draupadi's recollection at the end, when she falls a victim at Himavant, is addressed to Krishna to whom she communicates her hopes and desires as well as distress and dismay, not as the great queen of the Pandavas who was instrumental in establishing dharma in Bharat, but very much as a woman of flesh and blood who all along carried an immense emptiness in herself occasioned by her tortuous and suffering life. Incidentally Draupadi raises protest against male chauvinism, declares that all war is futile, and finally rejects heaven in favour of this human world, however temporary and limited it may be. *Jajnaseni* is an interesting work, and shows a strong, intelligent, contemporary feminine attitude towards the great, ancient epic.

Dr. S. V. Sukthankar while discussing on the meaning of Mahabharat in 1942, spoke of three dimensions in Mahabharat : mundane, ethical and metaphysical. Later, Dr. Iravati Karve and poet Budhadev Bose discussed Mahabharat as a great secular document of life and interpreted it from the modern man's point of view. But probably

Sri Aurobindo goes to its essence when he speaks of it as 'highly artistic representation of intimate significances of life'. That is how the modern writers look at Mahabharat, as providing innumerable significances of the fundamental problems of life.



WORSHIP OF MOTHER GODDESS— SARALA AND RADHANATH : A COMPARATIVE REFERENCE

Sarala Das lived and wrote in the 15th century. Radhanath Roy lived from 1848 to 1906, and most of his major Kavyas were written in the last two decades of the 19th century. Thus a period of about 380 years intervened between Sarala's and Radhanath's poetry—a period of great stress and strain for Orissa during which she lost her independence (1568) and came to be ruled successively by the Moghuls, Muslims, Marathas and the British. The change in time along with political changes brought in considerable socio-cultural changes as well as changes in attitudes which may be easily noted even in a cursory assessment of the poetry of these two important writers. But one similarity which can even surprise the casual reader is exhibited in their references to the worship of mother goddess, that is, Durga, Kali, Mahamaya etc. again and again in their Kavyas. This is an interesting similarity, and testifies to the strength of the Sakti-tradition in Orissa, which inspite of being an ancient tradition (the present image of Viraja at Jajpur belonged to 5th century A. D. and the worship predates that time) that flourished from about 6th century to 12 century A. D. during the times of Sailodbhavas, Bhaumakaras and Somavanshis, had to some extent declined due to lack of royal patronage with the coming of the Vaishnavite Gangas and after that. But the fact remains that the worship never declined inspite of the vicissitudes of religion and politics and it only spread out in innumerable streams, in innumerable local tradition all over Orissa and continued to grip the common mind with equal strength and devotion. Hence the interesting similarity between Sarala and Radhanath, though they were separated by more than three and half centuries.

Sarala Das wrote a whole book on mother-goddess and entitled it as *Chandi Purana* (a definitive edition has been edited by Dr. K.C. Sahoo, and published by Books and Books, Cuttack, 1984). By the poet's admission this was his third book, the other two being the *Ramayana* (*Vichitra Ramayana*) and *Mahabharat*. The scholars maintain that this is 'Devi Bhagabat' and find out kinship between Sri Durga and Vishnu. But the book as a whole is a fine account of the exploits of Mahisasura and his ultimate defeat in the hands of Sri Chandi. The drums of war reverberate from the beginning to the end, and all details about war and warfare and invasion and attack, are seen again and again till in the final holocaust Mahisasura is killed and torn into pieces. Dr. Sahoo points out how *Chandi Purana* written towards the end of the 15th century when Hindu states all over India were falling a prey to Muslim invaders, reflects the contemporary socio-political crisis and instability. The lust, greed and vandalism of the invaders have been allegorically focussed through the lust and greed of the forces of Mahisasura. But what is probably more important is the way the poet has established the strength of feminine power at a time when in the society women were universally ignored and insulted, and more particularly in the ultimate fight between the good and the evil, it is the women who symbolize the triumphant power of the forces of light against the forces of darkness. Thus the worship of mother-goddess is not just a worship. It is the establishment of that force symbolized in the female form, the source of fertility and life, that rises at the time of crisis and brings the wrong doers to book. At one level *Chandi Purana* is a narrative account, the product of its time. At another level it is an idea and a vision—the insight of a seer who could assess and analyse the elements of disintegration, towards realizing a wholesome and becoming life.

In fact references to mother-goddess in Sarala's Kavyas are innumerable. Some of the names may be listed

here, such as, Bhagabati, Katyaini, Tripura, Ugratara, Maheswari, Sarala, Narayani, Hingulai, Basanti, Bhairavi, Tarini, Ambika, Chamunda, Bhawani, Shibani, Churchika, Biraja, Kamakhi, Mangala and Sarbamangala etc., though the poet has not been always particular in giving their places of worship. Besides there are devotional hymns both in *Mahabharat* as well as separately, in 'Sarala-Malasri'. In fact the great epic begins with a prayer to Goddess Sarala where her place of worship and the times are pointed out along with the powers of the Goddess :

Towards the north of the blue, beautiful hill,
On the east of the great land of Bharat,
Along the singular river Chandrabhaga
That flows into the sea—
And the bank called Parsurama Ghata,
And the place called Kanakabati Patna,
And the adjoining village called Sarola—
She sits—the Maheswari,
Called Sarola Chandi—
The great ascetic, the great Vaishnavi,
The holiest woman who liberally
bestows boons to all.

In 'Sarala-Malasri' the prayer to the Goddess has been made in general lessons where the poet meditates on the great beauty and power of the Goddess :

You are the great Yogini and incarnation
of great wisdom,
You ride across the sky on great tigers
and lions,
Your eyes bloom as flowers, and your feet
radiant like fresh lotus,
Your body as blue as the clouds;
And you are here, there, every where—
You are the most beautiful of all.

The references to mother-goddess in Sarala Das's poetry are full of passionate intensity and they have brought in an atmosphere of immense beauty and tranquillity.

In Radhanath's poetry, too, the references to mother-goddess are equally frequent and prominent. These can be seen at two levels. First of all, like Sarala, Radhanath has also listed the goddesses, but with a difference. That is, in each case, he pin-points the place, points out its specific nature and refers to particular power or beauty of the goddess, as a result of which, almost involuntarily, the reader is led to know many parts of Orissa, and its famous hills, rivers and forests which have in course of time grown up in traditions of worship. Thus in *Chandrabhaga* (published 1886) the poem begins with an account of goddesses who have assembled at Lord Jagannath's temple at Sri Nilachala on the occasion of a festival. They are, 1) Harachandi, from 'marshy beaches' of Chilika, 2) Bhagabati, from Banapur, where 'Solari hills see their faces on the mirror-like water of the lake' 3) Bhubaneswari from Bhubaneswar, where 'golden hills' stand and thousands of 'flowers bloom in Ekamra garden', 4) Maninag Durga from Ranapur, where she is worshipped at the 'top of the Maninag hills' 'with blood red flowers', 5) Churchika from Banki, where 'sailors worship the goddess, 6) Barunei, from Khurdha where 'innumerable streams' from Barunei hills 'wash the feet of the goddess' 7) Chandika from Debidwar, where the great river Mahanadi flows through hills, 8) Chandi, from Cuttack, wearing 'white flowers in her dark dresses' like a 'smart lady of the town', 9) Sarala from Jhankada, who rides on a lion and 'always brings succour to her devotees', 10) Mangala from Kakatpur, which is 'infested with bears' and 11) Kalijai, the goddess from lonely hillock in Chilika, where hills have risen from inside the blue waters and where 'in moonlit nights the lonely sailors get startled at hearing the unearthly fairy songs floating across the waves'.

Chandrabhaga is not a lone example. In other poems of Radhanath too, such as *Nandikeswari*, *Usha*, *Parbati*, *Chilika*, *Jajatikeshari* etc. one comes across these references again and again. Apart from highlighting many beautiful places of Orissa, they testify the strength and spread of mother-goddess worship in the land, in coastal areas as well as in the north and western mountaineous forest-tracts. But the second level of references are interesting. Unlike Sarala who used the story of Chandi and Mahisasura as an allegory to comment on the contemporary socio-political conditions. Radhanath used mother-goddess to promote the sequences of his story, and to finally bring the necessary resolutions in each case. This is particularly seen in two poems. *Usha* (published 1888) and *Jajatikeshari* (published 1895). When at the end of the story in *Usha* the situation becomes suddenly tragic, and all, including the king, were drowned in great sorrow, the Goddess Kali, the presiding deity of the kingdom, appeared to the king in dream, and explained the strange co-ordination of events.

The king, while unconscious, saw the strange dream—
Kali appeared in front—dark, as dark clouds,
The garland of skulls hung from her neck
like cranes against the clouds, darkness,
And the sword throne in her hands like lightening.

In fact the Goddess's explanation and advice consoled the king and the people, the tragic happenings were accepted as works of destiny, and the events were brought to their normal conclusion when the young couple though dead were coronated with all honour, and a pavillion was built to commemorate their memory.

In *Usha* the goddess was Kali or Shyama, and she was worshipped on the bank of Balangi, at Nurupur, which was a part of present Baleswar town. In *Jajatikeshari* the goddess was Sri Biraja of present Jajpur town. As in *Usha* so also in *Jajatikeshari* the goddess interferes at a point

towards the end of the story when the events were going to be tragic after a clandestine love-affair between the young princess and the prince. The young prince has been captured from inside the palace and he has been ordered to fight it out with seven warriors in the public arena. But the fight did not take place. The presiding deity, goddess Biraja, appeared to the king in dream and explained the situation and the divine protection enjoyed by the young prince, and advised the king to accept the prince as his son-in-law and formalize the marriage between him and the princess, because that is the destiny divinely ordained for the future of the kingdom. The goddess as she appeared in dream, brought feelings of great grace and happiness to the king.

The haleyon rays from the Mother's lips
cut through all my sins,
And made my heart clear and sparkling
like the river in Bhadra,
That divine fragrance even the creator
would not have smelt in his dreams,
And Her words exceeded and drowned
all the lines of music.

The story ended in happiness. The difference from *Usha* is that whereas in the former the Goddess's interference brought courage and consolation to sorrowing people, in the latter it averted a tragic situation and brought hope and happiness for the future in the king and the people. But in both, the goddesses symbolize the forces of inexorable destiny to which human beings have to bow ultimately. In Radhanath mother-goddess is humanized and yet she stands apart guiding the courses of events.

As I said earlier, the tradition of worship of mother-goddess is very ancient in Orissa, and in art and architecture, as well as in literature we had evidences of it in many forms. Both Sarala and Radhanath while conforming to the

tradition, acted as per the condition of their own times. But what is to be noted in both cases, is the power of the creative mind at work, which could transform the simple references to works of imagination and power, as a result of which new dimensions could be added to an otherwise simple tradition of worship and devotion.



GOPINATH MOHANTY NOVELIST

I

Gopinath Mohanty was born on April 1914 in the village Nagabali, situated on the river Sidhua, 7 miles downstream from Cuttack city. He was the 9th and the youngest child of his parents, his father being 50 and the mother 44 when he was born. His family, though fallen to bad days at the time, was a well known aristocratic Zamindar of the area with rich connections and a legendary origin, the ancestry of which was traced to a royal family which ruled near Bhubaneswar in the early part of the 18th century. His great grandfather Dharmu Mohanty was the first settler at Nagabali some time in the early part of the 19th century and bought extensive land, starting from a part of Cuttack city half way to Bhubaneswar. He was an illustrious person in many ways and a great upholder of ancient traditions and rich heritage of the nation, yet acutely conscious of the new ways that were coming to the country because of the British rule which started in Orissa from 1803. His son Nabin became an engineer, and Nabin as well as his brother-in-law Sadei who also became an engineer, were in charge of the construction work of Naraj and Jobra anicuts respectively in the river Mahanadi, near Cuttack city. The author's father and uncles also became engineers and they worked in different parts of Bihar and Orissa. One uncle particularly, Dibyasingha Mohanty, who died untimely in Patna in 1913 and from whom, it is said, the author inherited many qualities, was probably the first executive engineer of Orissa. As the family took to new ways of living, the ancient agricultural aristocracy decayed, and by 1914 the reputation of the family was more in name than in reality. The author recollects how one night when he was 7, he saw his mother crying, because the last piece

of the Zamindari had been sold away. In the account of Sindhu Chaudhury's house in *Matimatala* (The Jnanpith Award winning novel for 1974) which strongly reminds of the author's own house at Nagabali, we get a glimpse of this ruined aristocracy of which only a decorated, sculptured facade remains. Thus the author was born to a situation which though did not promote physical well-being, yet was responsible for inculcating in him a deep sense of love and respect for the ancient traditions and values of the nation. These are seen as recurrent motifs in *Matimatala* where the present life is realised in the context of a very rich past.

Gopinath's father was Suryamani Mohanty. He died on July 1, 1926, when the author was 12. He was a remarkable person who had powerfully shaped his son's character and attitude to life. He had earlier decided not to serve under the British and consequently he took up jobs with the feudatory kings of Orissa. Even then he could never compromise for his personal gains and time and again he had to give up jobs and remain without employment. *Matimatala* is dedicated to his memory in these words— "To my father, who attained knowledge about God, who realised divine grace through austere religious practice; my Guru, whom above everybody else I respect and revere..." Elsewhere, in his autobiography, Gopinath speaks of his father as a straight man, a strong man, a man having all the good qualities you can ever imagine, a "disinterested, detached man, a saint." Sindhu Chaudhury, an important character in *Matimatala*, is modelled on the author's father. Besides, Gopinath's capacity to perceive life in all things which formed a vital aspect of his own creative sensibility in *Matimatala* as well as elsewhere, is due to his father's influence.

Gopinath left his village in August, 1923, with his father who went to Sonapur to take up a job. After that he has gone back to his village at long intervals and that too for

short periods though during his long service career he had widely travelled in the villages of Orissa. But the childhood years which he spent in the intimate surroundings of his own and neighbouring villages, often crossing or recrossing the river Sidhua, or walking 4 to 5 miles to his aunt's or sister's house, have remained deeply alive in him. He was drunk with the quiet, cool beauty of the countryside, as Wordsworth would have said about it, and it provided a wonderful structure to his stories, novels and even essays. At that time Nagabali was famous for its folk-music and folk-operas and in his family, among his uncles and cousins, he had a number of persons who sang, danced, acted and wrote plays. Thus the author grew up in a countryside rich with traditional culture and imbibed many of its features in his own writings. Even today he is not a lone writer in his own family. His elder brother Kanhu Charan Mohanty and his nephew Guruprasad Mohanty have both received, in addition to himself, Sahitya Akademy Awards in novel and poetry respectively. Yet another gain of the author at this time was his acquisition of a rich stock of idiomatic and colloquial language which he unconsciously picked up from his parents and elder persons as well as from his co-villagers and the old aristocratic families connected with his own family. No doubt he has gone on adding to this stock subsequently. But what he originally received during his childhood years contributes largely to that excellent idiomatic life of *Matimatala* which remains almost unique and unsurpassed in the whole range of modern Oriya literature.

Gopinath's school years were partly spent at Sonepur, so long his father stayed there. Subsequently, after the death of his father, he shifted to Patna (Bihar) and stayed with his brother Giridhari who was working in the Bihar-Orissa Secretariate. He matriculated in the year 1930 and stood second in the Patna University. He got a scholarship but as his mother and another brother wanted

him nearer home he came to Cuttack and joined Ravenshaw College. He passed out in 1936, obtaining an M.A. in English and standing first in Patna University. He wanted to join I.C.S., or alternatively to get a Professorship in the College. He could not pursue his studies for I.C.S. due to financial difficulties and could not get a Professorship because there was no vacancy. He joined Orissa Administrative Service (Junior) as there was no recruitment to O.A.S. (Senior) at that time, in 1938, on a salary of Rs. 100/- p.m. On May 31, 1940, he married Adarmoni Devi, to whom he has dedicated his Sahitya Akademi Award winning novel *Amrutar Santan*.

The period from 1930 to 1938 could be considered as a formative time for the author. There were three major influences on him, two coming from the West, i.e., Marx and Russian Revolution, and Freud, and the other from inside the country, i.e., Gandhiji and the nationalistic movements of the twenties and the thirties. He read widely and deeply often going beyond the routine studies in the College, his two special favourites being Romain Rolland and Gorky. Cuttack at that time was a small town with a lot of open space and people lived there in cordial relationship with each other. Gopinath with his exuberance, sociability, creative talent and scholarship easily made a mark in the town. He collected friends, impressed people, experimented on new literary forms and almost led a revolt against the prevailing romantic taste in Oriya literature. He recollects those years as a continuous search for self identity through Western literature. He was eager to extend the dimensions of Oriya literature and to give it a significant place and position. He had deep roots in Oriya tradition and in Oriya idiomatic and colloquial life. These were now nourished by Western classics and Western approach to life. The first fruits of this synthesis could be seen interestingly in the literary essays which he wrote for contemporary journals in 1936 (*Kalashakti*, Power of Art, published 1973). The

essays appear as if they grow out of Oriya rural life where not only a colloquial language but the quiet beauty of Oriya countryside and rural-life is perceived with a fine creative sensibility. At the same time they incorporate points of view which are familiar only to Western readers.

In fact Gopinath started to write seriously from 1936 onwards and his first novel *Managahirar Chasa* was completed by 1938. Since then he has written continuously, with a single-minded devotion, quickly growing into maturity and excellence. During his service career he was posted in different parts of Orissa including a number of years in the southern tribal districts. All these years he maintained a fierce independent spirit which he had inherited from his father, and openly advocated the cause of the poor, the downtrodden and the tribals. These as well as his reputation as a writer made people unnecessarily jealous of him and antagonised the rich and the politically powerful. As a result he was adversely affected in service. He was superseded by his juniors who subsequently became commissioners while he was given a class I after 24 years of service and when he retired in 1969, it was on a salary of Rs. 1,080/- p.m. The following is an extract from a petition which was sent against him to Prime Minister Nehru in January, 1953, by the land owners and money lenders of Koraput where he was posted as a Special Assistant Agent combining the powers of S. D. O. and Subjudge under agency rules—"To our great calamity and disaster Sri Gopinath Mohanty is posted here as the special assistant agent at Rayagada. He is always fond of hillmen and behaves like hillmen himself. He very little respects other classes of people before them. He behaves as if only born for Adivasis".....When asked, Gopinath tries to laugh it away. He was like his father who gloried more in woe. The magic of his extremely animated personality is such that it never gives one a thread of suspicion that he ever was affected by adverse situations. Today, when he has almost

become a legendary figure in Orissa, he lives in perfect peace and tranquillity at Bhubaneswar, with his wife and six children.

II

Managahirar Chasa was Gopinath's first novel. It was published in 1940. Subsequently he has written 22 novels out of which 20 have been published, and in addition, stories have been collected in 8 volumes. The fictions can be divided into 3 main groups. The earliest group corresponds to his early service period when he was posted in the tribal district of Koraput. The novels are : *Dadi Budha*, *Paraja*, *Amrutar Santan*, *Siba Bhai*, *Apahanch*. They deal with the tribals. The second group deals with the people living in the towns. There are group as well as individual studies, high and low class differences, educated and uneducated distinctions. But generally these novels operate within the limits of the town. They are : *Harijana*, *Sarata Babunka Gali*, *Rahura Chhaya*, *Sapan Mati*, *Danapani*, *Laya Bilaya* etc. The last group is really one novel—*Matimatala*. It is an epic of Oriya village life. It is interesting to note that Gopinath's three major novels (both in size and quality), i. e. *Paraja*, *Amrutara Santan* and *Matimatala* deal with the tribals and the village-folk. The 'town novels', though they constitute the majority, are a shade lower than the first three. Among them *Harijana*, *Danapani* and *Laya-bilaya* stand out as better than the rest.

Paraja was published in 1945, when Gopinath has just left Koraput after 5 years' stay there. The novel deals with the Parajas, a very poor and small tribal group of the district of Koraput, having a population of about 6400. The details about the tribe emerge through an account of a small family in a small Paraja village at some distance away from Koraput town. The family was caught by adverse situations again and again till finally it was completely ruined and the father and his two sons were arrested as murderers. This tale

of woe is dramatically realised in the background of a rich external nature and is coupled with a sense of joy and hope seen generally in the tribe's character. Basically it is a clash between innocence and evil where the former is defeated. *Amrutar Santan* which was published 2 years after, had a wider perspective and was more complex in structure. The emphasis is still on one family and the locale is one village. But as it deals with the Kondhas, a more ancient and more populous group having a philosophy of life of their own, the novel's structure has become contemplative and philosophic. The evil is present and it does act, but innocence and virtue are also present and are powerfully operative. The simple and lineal features of *Paraja* are now replaced by a complex organisation and shifting relationships which give a deeper and more intense experience of life. In a way this difference is seen in Jilli and Puyu, the heroines of the two novels respectively. Whereas Jilli was selfishly interested to satisfy her own desires, Puyu could sacrifice herself for the sake of the family and for the hope of a new life to come.

Harijan was published in 1948, *Danapani* in 1955, and *Layabilaya* in 1961. All these years, except for a brief posting at Rayagada in Koraput district, Gopinath was either at Cuttack or Bhubaneswar or Puri. The novels of this period largely reflect his concern for the town and for all those who live in the town. The locale of *Harijana* is Cuttack, and of *Layabilaya* Puri, whereas in *Danapani* the town is generally present. *Harijana* deals with the Harijans who stay in dirty hovels, in a dirty part of the town. They are contrasted with the rich who exploit them and finally drive them out of the limits of the town. *Danapani* narrates the story of a man's rise to position in the process of which he employs all means including the use of his wife's beauty and youth. In both the novels the writer takes out the so called civilised cover of the man in the town and shows him as he really is—mean, small and essentially a hypocrite. Thus

Aghor in *Harijana* sleeps with his own step-sister and Sarojini in *Danapani* can commit adultery with impunity. These people lack nourishment (though they are fully nourished physically) which comes only from a contact with the soil and the nature and in which sense the Parajas, the Kondhas, the village-folk in *Matimatala*, and even the Harijans, are fully nourished. The later theme is elaborated in *Layabilaya* where a couple and their grown-up daughter come from Calcutta to Puri for a short visit. The contact with the sea rejuvenates them and they feel nourished as they have never felt before. But this is only a brief experience. They have to go back finally into the lifelessness of the dry, drab city. The directing tone in the tribal novels was compassion whereas in the 'town-novels' it is sharp, biting irony. In *Matimatala*, published in 1964, the writer combines both to create a newer and fuller awareness of life.

Matimatala is one of the longest novels in Oriya and the writer took about 10 years to complete it. It is an epic of Oriya village-life and never before a novel of equal magnitude and beauty was written in Oriya. Interestingly it has the barest outline of a story and the two major characters (the hero and the heroine) are presented with a remarkable reticence. The novel begins when the hero, Rabi, who had just passed his B.A., leaves his village and goes to the town in search of a job. On the way, as he stays with a friend for a night, he decides against taking up a job and returns to his village. His father, a local Zamindar, did not approve this. But Rabi stuck to his decision and the rest of the novel deals with his continuous attempts at organizing the village-life into a family life both in thought and deed. It is difficult to say how far he succeeds. In fact the novel ends in no resolution. But in the process the whole structure of rural Oriya life, its originality, strength, changes and weaknesses are laid bare in a unique totality.

One central situation in the novel is when Rabi confronts his father. The confrontation was on the issue of his marriage. Yet it takes the form of a clash between two generations, or more correctly between two sets of values—one tradition-bound and rigid, while the other takes the essence of tradition and at the same time, flexible. Apparently the father remains firm, but he loses in spirit and at the end he is seen as a part of a natural life where old trees decay and new roots grow up. This is how the writer sums up the situation—"The world of wild refuse had deeply and tenderly appropriated him. A dry log lay; trees stood around; old man was lying.....lying fast asleep. As if he had existed all along like this, maintaining this equation with his surroundings; as if this was the natural function of his life. And like the drops of water dripping from the spring jar time dripped in drops through the empty spaces, continued to drip and kept flowing along." In a different vein the writer speaks of Agani Ray, the village tout—"He was dark, thin and tall, and his gaunt face was smooth and was clean shaven because it was hairless from birth, and his bald head was like a longish wood-apple fixed to a long iron-rod.....When he stares at anyone in the face from his hollow and sunken eyes, his fixed gaze seems to sear through and cling". The sketch is humorous yet it shows Agani Ray as a snake, a devil who operates in life. Still another aspect is the description of the flood which runs for about 150 pages in the novel and which is probably a unique such account in Indian literature. The floods brought devastation where man was seen as helpless and ugly—a naked, rotten corpse floating in water. On the other hand the floods provided opportunity for realizing finest human qualities such as compassion, tolerance and sacrifice. The real distinction of *Matimatala* lies in its profundity, in its nature of experiment on vision and in its quality or wisdom which emerge through innumerable details of light and shade as the basic factors of existence.

III

It is amazing to trace the multiple patterns in the novels and stories of Gopinath. As mentioned earlier he has generally worked in three main areas. But within these limitations there are many factors which can be noted by an alert reader. For example, his response to nature which provides a running structure in all his works. This nature is descriptive, at the same time it is creative, and in books like *Paraja*, *Amrutara Santan*, *Layabilaya* and *Matimatala*, it assumes a vital life of its own. Secondly and significantly the writer's awareness of the social changes and the problems of contemporary society provide another structural frame in his works. The forties, fifties and the sixties, which constitute the major part of the writer's working period correspond to the pre-Independent period of preparation and the post-Independent era of planning and development. These have influenced the average man's life in many ways whether he is in the town or in the village or in the hills. A pertinent example is Bipin, the Development Officer in *Matimatala* who poses a viable alternative to the type of development work undertaken by Rabi. Still another recurrent structural frame is created in author's continuous references to tradition or to the glorious past of the nation. Again it is seen to its best advantage in *Matimatala* though elsewhere in two stories, *Itihas* and *Se* (published in *Ghasar Phula* and *Udanta Khai* respectively) the past tradition is recreated in the present through physical excavation and invocation of a mysterious spirit respectively. Probably the most powerful structural frame is provided by the use of language and again the best example is *Matimatala*. From this point of view it remains unique in modern Oriya literature and can only be compared with the use of language in Phakir Mohan Senapati's novels and stories in the early part of the 20th century. The language is creative and perceptive and its idiomatic life is so vital that it becomes an organic part of the experiences it communicates.

Structurally the books of Gopinath are so involved in local references that they at times appear to give only a limited perspective. But basically they deal with the universals of human existence as manifested locally in the complications of a tribal or rural or urban life when such life comes under the grinding impact of urban and industrial civilization. This theme—the conflict of cultures and the impact of a new civilization on the old—is seen most remarkably in *Matimatala* which differs from the earlier major novels, i.e. *Paraja* and *Amrutar Santan* in the sense that whereas in *Paraja* the gloom was total and in *Amrutar Santan* it breaks up with the glimpses of a new hope, in *Matimatala* the vision of a new life is spelt more elaborately and more vigorously. The writer's awareness of the changing cultures is a fundamental awareness of the present time and the expressions of this awareness in his novels and stories give the most significant reaction of Oriya mind to the intricacies of the present technological age. Speaking of D.H. Lawrence, F.R. Leavis pointed out that 'the insight, the wisdom, the revived and re-educated feeling for health that Lawrence brings are what as our civilisation goes we desperately need'. This applies to Gopinath Mohanty. We cannot study his work and art without forming a vivid sense of the man, and remembering that he is still writing among us, even in these days, it should give us faith in the 'creative human spirit and its power to ensue fullness of life'



SACHI ROUTRAY : HIS LIFE AND WORK

Sachi Routray or Satchidananda Routray was born in 1913, at a place called Gurujangh, in Khurda, about 30 kms from Bhubaneswar on Bhubaneswar-Madras National Highway. His family was affluent and well-known, and his father Prasanna Kumar Routray, an advocate in Khurda court, was an important Congress leader of the time. He read in Khurda High School, subsequently shifted to Jajpur, Puri and Calcutta, till he finally came to Cuttack, from where he obtained his B.A. degree in 1939. Routray's student career was a disturbed one as he often participated in the contemporary struggle for freedom for which he was also victimized from time to time, to the extent that he was not permitted to continue his studies further after B.A. In 1942 Routray took up a job in Calcutta, as the Chief Labour Welfare Officer in Kesoram Cotton Mills, where he continued for 20 years, till 1962, rising to become the Mill's Executive Officer and also at times, Factory Manager. He returned to Cuttack in 1962, where he settled with his wife and four children.

Routray's earliest poems were written while he was in the school, at the age of 12, and his first poetry book entitled *Patheya* (For the Road) was published in 1939. The book was dedicated to 'young traveller' and contained 52 sequences conveying 'mellifluous experiences' concerning love, nature, and general dissatisfaction against the prevailing social injustice and inequalities. Routray was frequently writing in contemporary journals. Between 1933 and 1934, he wrote a group of poems dealing with nature and rural life, which were later collected as *Pallisree* (Rural Graces, first edition : 1941). The poems became greatly popular, and even at that young age, established Routray's reputation as a competent poet. In 1935, when he was a

student in Calcutta, his first novel was published. It was entitled *Chitragreeba*, and it was a satirically humorous picture of Calcutta's intelligentsia. But Routray's main forte was poetry, and his next volume of poems was published in 1938, from Cuttack. It was entitled *Abhijan* (The Invasion) and contained a number of poems with contemporary socialist and Marxist attitudes. The same year Routray participated in the agitation for freedom in the feudatory states of Orissa and wrote his famous poem *Baji Rout* (First edition : 1943) on the death of a young boatman boy, who became a martyr for the cause of Independence, when he was shot dead by the soldiers of the king of Dhenkanal. The poem inspired the young generation of fighters and rapidly expanded the reputation of Routray as a fine progressive poet.

The forties were an important time for Routray. He wrote rapidly and almost continuously, and by the end of the forties, he came to be recognized as a major poetic voice in Oriya literature. The poetical volumes, in addition to *Baji Rout*, that were published during this period were *Pandulipi* (The Manuscript, 1947), *Abhijnan* (The Signet, 1948), *Hasant* (Towards Laughter, 1948), and *Bhanumatira Desa* (The Land of Bhanumati, 1949). Of these, *Pandulipi* containing about 65 poems, was most substantial, and expressed a clear direction towards a new taste and sensibility other than 'romantic' or 'progressive', in the post-Independence Oriya literature. Routray wrote stories, too, largely of a socio-psychological type, during this period, and these were collected in 3 volumes entitled *Masanira Phula* (The Flower of the Cremation Ground, 1948), *Matira Taj* (The Crown of the Earth, 1948) and *Chhai* (The Shadow, 1949). Most of his major poetic volumes in the new mode got published during the fifties, the sixties and the seventies. They were *Swagat* (Soliloquy, 1958), *Kabita-1962* (Poetry-1962, 1962), *Kabita-1969* (Poetry-1969, 1969), *Kabita-1971* (Poetry-1971, 1972) and *Kabita-1974* (Poetry-1974, 1975).

The five volumes together contained about 270 poems, many of which particularly exhibited a keen sensitiveness to a spoken, conversational rhythm and showed the poet's capacity to use colloquial idioms at ease. Subsequently there have been two more volumes of poetry. Besides, the poet's theoretical discussions on Marxist poetry as well as on new poetry as related to Oriya literature, have been recently collected in a few volumes.

Looking at Routray's poetry as a whole (because it is in poetry where he is best assessed and accepted), a total creative period of more than half a century, is by itself a remarkable feat. Thus the roots that grew in the early thirties continued to nourish a rich flowering till almost the end of the seventies, and in the process generations of Oriya poets have been nourished and sustained at different levels. Though Routray's is not the most important poetic voice today in Oriya yet his contribution to the rich poetic-crop in Oriya, particularly after Independence, is of great significance. The most interesting aspect of Routray's poetry lies in its manifold directions. At least three distinct areas can be seen in his poetry. The first, and probably the earliest, relates to his association with Marxist ideas of contemporary Europe. It dates back to mid-thirties, when some politically left-oriented writers of Orissa, who called themselves 'progressive', combined together to form an association called Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad (The New Age Literary Association) with the declared aim of making literature an agent of 'revolution' and social change. Routray was an important member of this group, and many of the poems that he wrote at this time, and even later, such as *Sramika Kabi* (The Labourer Poet), *Sarbahara* (The Proletariat), *Spen* (Spain), *Biplabara Janmadine* (On the Birthday of Revolution), *Nal November* (The Red November), *Prabhatpherira Gan* (The Song in the Morning), *Barlin* (Berlin), *Hitlar* (Hitler) and *Koria* (Korea) etc. reflect the poet's preoccupation with

the 'progressive' ideas. The best known poem of this mode was *Baji Rout*, a poem in five sequences and in about 1,000 (one thousand) lines, which expresses the poet's sorrow and sympathy for the boy who was killed, and great anger against those who killed him. But basically the poem celebrates the undying human soul that triumphs over gloom and destruction, only to rise into a new life of universal hope and liberty. The poem begins with the proclamation :

No, it's not a funeral pyre,
It's an undying flame in darkness,
It's not to burn by itself
But to burn others in a holocaust.

And goes to moan about the 'loss',

Oh, what a disobedient boy !
He didn't care for guns, kings and storms,
Left all his games in dust,
And smilingly served his life
before the bullet.

To end finally with an assurance,

He gives confidence in victory,
Hope in defeat;
He is not yours alone, Oh mother,
He is the world's thirst and desire.

The second area in Routray's poetry relates to such poems as are predominantly romantic in tone and structure. Though in these poems particularly a romantic reaction to love, beauty and nature can be seen throughout Routray's poetic career, yet like the progressive poems they can be dated back to the thirties and to the influence of another poetry-movement called, Sabuja Andolan or the Green Movement. Though Routray was not involved with this movement as he was with the 'progressive' one yet in general approach and understanding, many of his poems showed a close resemblance with the poems of this movement.

A number of poems in *Patheya*, *Abhijan*, *Abhijnan*, and *Pandulipi* etc. testify to this trend. Even later, when Routray's poetic mode has changed, one can perceive romantic taste and sensibility in the total poetic structure. The two poetical volumes that may be particularly noted in this connection are *Pallisree* and *Bhanumatira Desa*. The former has a single theme, that is to project beautifully the unitary and yet socially contradictory personality of Oriya village. On the one hand there is joy, pleasure and happiness in contemplating the beauties of village and the innocent customs of village people and on the other, there is sorrow and melancholy reflecting the exploitation of the rich at the expense of the village-poor. The first poem, entitled *Chhota Mora Gaanti* (Small is my Village), a very popular poem, sums up the poet's indebtedness to the village in a romantic vein :

Its water as blood
 Flows in my nerves;
 Its air as breath
 Steers my life;
 Its flowers and green creepers
 Give speech to my tongue;
 And its dawn in the month of *Phaguna*
 Gives new look to my eyes—
 Its streams made me a poet
 And drowned me in the waves of dreams.

The latter also deals with nature, but it combines nature with love in an intimate proximity. There is love in its physical aspect and also at the same time as a mental attitude. The lover 'belongs' to nature, and himself becomes a part of its naturalness. The lady-love comes from outside, from the town, and sees nature as a part of temporary relaxation, but otherwise as a place of horror. The atmosphere conjures up feelings of dream and remoteness, and the love grows through a sense of longing and melancholy. The land

of Bhanumati (*Bhanumatira Desa*) is the symbol of both fruition and failure, and shows Routray's romantic sensibility at its best.

The third area of Routray's poetry began, in fact, after Independence, when the attitude of Oriya poets shifted from emotions of progressive patriotism, nationalism and equality on the one hand and feelings of love and nature on the other, to a contemplation of man's condition in a hostile, uncomprehending world. The taste as well as the sensibility were fast changing and Routray's poetry not only reflected the change but also helped to formulate the new attitudes in a significant way. A few poems from *Pandulipi* (1947), but more poems from *Swagat* (1958), *Kabita-1962* (1962), and from subsequent volumes, testify to this new mode or the third area in Routray's poetry. Thus for example in *Pratima Nayak*, from *Pandulipi*, which is about a woman-acquaintance of the poet who has lost her health and beauty through social and family compulsions (during the second world war), the poem moves quickly into a helpless pity only to be resolved ironically in the context of corroding time ("Pratima Nayak smiles/And touch of cream on her lips/Laughter like khaki cloth on her face/And her eyes twinkle for night./Forests move quickly on either side/And circles of stars move by silently.")

Similarly in another poem *Jyamiti* (Geometry) from the same volume, love, nature, and love's desires and nature's fruitfulness are merged in each other in a metaphysical compactness only to move towards a final suggestion of loss and emptiness. These emotions continue in a poem entitled *Eka Bandhabira Janmadinare* (On the Occasion of a Lady-friend's Birthday) from *Swagat*—the feelings of burning and destruction in an alienated self—

You, an iron-dove,
Heated by the intense heat of tropics,
And I, an empty sky,

All alone—burning.
I have no shadows,
I only heated you—
Your steel body, your metal cheeks,
With my volcanic blast;
And in great holocaust,
I burn alone—always, eternally.

In *Smrutilekha* (A Memory) from *Kabita-1962*, the reference to a letter is used as a stepping-stone to explore layers of experience in time and space. As the associations range from Kalidas's Dasarna to Calcutta's Chowringhee and Australia's Melbourne, one moves from a sense of intense physical pleasure ('Her touch/The smell of her body/And liquifactions of her pleasure') to a startling perception of tranquil happiness where Dasarna and Melbourne become one ('I remember/Far away/In the dense shades of ripe black-berris/My Dasarna/My village/My Melbourne/My dearest city').

Even things like a lady's hair-pin or a scooter have let the poet to explore deeper layers of experience and understanding. The poem *Hair-Pin* (from *Kabita-1971*) begins with a search for a lost hair-pin everywhere in the house ('I can't find it/Where is your hair-pin?'). The search slowly extends to other areas, such as, distant hotels, river-banks and sea-beaches, obviously the places the protagonist might have visited along with the lady. But then there are other different areas too, less substantial and countable, such as, 'layers of darkness' in the 'intensity of moon-shine', and 'climbing steps of time'—far and near, in the remote past and distant future. Finally, the hair-pin becomes the symbol of youthful life ('Your tresses, beautiful and compact/And the domes of your breast') and its loss leads to a shocking vision of nakedness, emptiness and death. Similarly the poem *Lal Skutar* (Red Scooter, also from *Kabita-1971*) begins dramatically with reference to the

movement of a scooter. But it is not alone in the familiar city-streets that the scooter moves through. On the other hand it races headlong over emptiness, towards a bottomless abyss, where all things sink and die. But it is also a movement in time, where the past is compounded with the present and the scooter moves along the familiar city-streets in pursuit of a fixed course of action, such as going for a picnic ("There are food and drinks/and packets of sandwiches/And a tourist map/And a list of inns"). Yet at a different level, the movement is from non-being to being, from that which is less vital to that else which is more vital, and the point of annihilation becomes the final point of realization. ("The sound rises from emptiness/And the scooter races from non-being to being/Tangentially/Under the blue cities"). Still differently, probably there is no movement, the scooter never moves ("Probably it has never moved/Across the time's river"). Yet the existence involves action, and action leads to more action and finally to the final point of annihilation to which the protagonist is eager to come.

Routray's poetry is like a rich crop. Its abundance across decades is a point to note. Whether it is in romanticism or left-oriented 'progressivism', or in metaphysical compactness, it has always shown a keen awareness, both in language and imagination. He introduced free verse in Oriya and achieved a significant integration between the spoken and written language, and between the poetic and conventional rhythm. His alertness for the language and his capacity to introduce newer and fresher images, again and again, brought a startling livingness to Oriya poetry in the forties and fifties. He has been a major voice, and his poetry has contributed, as pointed out earlier, very importantly to the rich mosaic of Oriya poetry after Independence.



INDEX

(The names of the books are given in italics)

- Akas Pari Nibida* (ākās pari nibida) 12
Abhijan (abhijān) 22
Amadabata (amadā bāta) 17
Amrutar Santan (amrutar santān) 2, 144
Andha Mahumachi (andha mahumāchi) 11, 83
Astapadi (astapadi) 78
Bal, Nandakishor (Nandakisor Baḷ) 42
Barik, Saurindra (Saurindra Bārik) 12, 126
Baxi Jagabandhu (Baxi Jagabandhu) 23
Bhanja, Upendra (Upendra Bhanja) 112
Bhata (bhāta) 22
Bisad Ek Rutu (bisāda eka rutu) 11, 66
Bitarkita Aparahna (bitarkita aparāhna) 10, 25
Chilika (chilikā) 32
Chottroy, Gopal (Gopāl Chotarāya) 23
Darabar (darabāra) 34
Das, Balaram (Baḷarām Dās) 107
Das, Gopabandhu (Gopabandhu Dās) 45, 100
Das, Jagannath Prasad (Jagannāth Prasād Dās) 11, 85
Das, Kishori Charan (Kisori Caraṇ Dās) 9
Das, Manoj (Manoj Dās) 9
Das, Manoranjan (Manoranjan Dās) 9, 23, 25
Das, Nilakantha (Niḷakantha Dās) 47, 102
Das, Sarala (Sāraḷā Dās) 117, 132
Gadanayak, Radhamohan (Rādhāmohan Gadanāyak) 53

Ghara Diha (ghara diha) 17
Je Jahar Nirjanata (je jāhār nirjanatā) 11, 87
Kabita 1962 (kabitā 1962) 61, 154
Kabya Sanchayan (kābya sancayana) 50
Kanta O Phula (kantā o phula) 59
Kara Kabita (kārā kabitā) 46, 101
Konarke (koṇārke) 47
Mahajatra (mahājātrā) 30, 96
 Mahapatra, Godabarish (Godābaris Mahāpātra) 57
 Mahapatra, Lakhmikanth (Laxmikānta Mahāpātra) 57, 102
 Mahapatra, Nityananda (Nityānanda Mahāpātra) 14
 Mahapatra, Sitakant (Sitākānta Mahāpātra) 6, 75, 123
 Mansingh, Mayadhar (Māyādhār Mānsimha) 51
Mati Matala (māti mātāḷa) 3, 145
 Meher, Gangadhar (Gangādhār Meher) 39, 98
 Mishra, Bijoy (Bijaya Misra) 27
 Mishra, Godabarish (Godābaris Misra) 47, 102
 Mishra, Saubhagya Kumar (Saubhagya Kumār Misra) 11, 83
 Mohanty Gopinath (Gopināth Mahānti) 1, 8, 15, 138-148
 Mohanty, Guruprasad (Guruprasād Mahānti) 6, 84
 Mohanty, Kanhu Charan (Kānhu Caran Mahānti) 16
 Mohanty, Surendra (Surendra Mahānti) 9
Nandika Keshari (Nandikā Kesari) 10, 25
 Nayak, Lakhmidhar (Laxmidhar Nāyak) 17
Nilā Saila (niḷa saila) 16
Nutan Kabita (nutana kabitā) 11, 63
 Panda, Rajendra Kishor (Rājendra Kisor Pandā) 12
 Panigrahi, Kalindi Charan (Kālindi Caran Pānigrāhi) 50
Paraja (parajā) 1, 2, 143
 Pattanaik, Akhilmohan (Akhilmohan Pattanāyak) 14

Pattanaik, Ananta (Ananta Pattanāyak) 13, 55
 Pattanaik (also Patnaik), Baikunthanath
 (Baikunthanāth Pattanāyak) 50
 Pattanaik, Basanta Kumari (Basanta Kumāri Pattanāyak) 17
 Pattanaik, Kalicharan (Kāḷicaranṇ Pattanāyak) 22
 Pattanaik, Padma Charan (Padmacaranṇ Pattanāyak) 53, 103
 Pattanaik, Rajkishor (Rājķisor Pattanāyak) 17
 Rao, Bhanuji (Bhānuji Rāo) 11, 66
 Rao, Madhusudan (Madhusudan Rāo) 37, 97
 Rath, Ramakant (Ramākānta Ratha) 1, 6, 71
 Ray, Radhanath (Rādhānāth Rāya) 30, 94, 119, 134
 Routroy, Sachi (Saci Rāutrāya) 5, 61, 104, 149-156
 Sabat, Kuntala Kumari (Kuntaḷā Kumāri Sābat) 54
Sabdar Akash (sabdar ākāsā) 78
 Sahu, Mahapatra Nilamoni (Mahāpātra Niḷamaṇi Sāhu) 9
Sailakalpa (saiḷakaḷpa) 12
Samudrasnan (samudra snāna) 7, 64
Sandigdha Mrugaya (sandigdha mrugayā) 7, 71
Sasti (sāsti) 16
 Senapati, Phakir Mohan (Phakir Mohan Senāpati) 43
Sri Radha (Sri Rādhā) 1
Tapaswini (tapaswini) 41, 112

Other books published
by the Department—

**Dialogues (Six
Literary Interviews)**

Edited by
K. Ayyappa Paniker*

Price : Rs. 30.00

Narrative Technique

by P. G. Rama Rao

Price : Rs. 20.00